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BEHIND THE SCENES IN MANY WARS

By the Same Author

A FREELANCE IN KASHMIR

A Novel

"This gallant tale of adventure. Incidents, colouring and characterization are excellent."—*The Times*.

JOHN MURRAY

THE ARMIES OF INDIA

A. & C. BLACK

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EGYPT & SINAI

**PART OF OFFICIAL HISTORY
OF THE GREAT WAR**

AFGHANISTAN

(from Darius to Amanullah)

G. H. BELL & SON

THE ARMY

**GEOFFREY BLES
(Life and Work Series)**



LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE S. MACMUNN, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O.

to Mr. Sinclair
George Macmunn

BEHIND THE SCENES IN MANY WARS

BEING
THE MILITARY REMINISCENCES OF
LIEUT.-GENERAL
SIR GEORGE MACMUNN,
K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O.
COLONEL COMMANDANT THE ROYAL ARTILLERY

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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CHAPTER I

THE KING'S GAMBIT

"For his laurels are green, when his hair is grey,
And it's heigh for the life of a soldier."

GENERATION TO GENERATION

LINE upon line, precept upon precept, generation to generation, is the make-up of that almost hereditary caste, resembling to some extent the Rajpoot classes of India, the officers of His Majesty's Services. From Minden onwards the Army families date their service, father to son, father to son, each a bit poorer than the generation before. And it may safely be assumed that the same folk went with the Black Prince to the conquest of France and to the Levant crusading.

Life in the Army and Navy has been "an abiding city" for many of the families of England and Scotland, the folk of the English Pale and the North of Ireland, and it is well that it should remain so. They have made the *milieu* in which the people of these islands have grown rich, and have "salted it down with our bones." Most of us serve His Majesty by land and by sea and hereafter no doubt in the air, because it has never occurred to us to do anything else. It is not often that we throw up the fortunate ones, the admirals and generals and the grand crosses, but rather form the rank and file of the commissioned officers, dying quietly in our tracks and yet making such a mould as lately cast two million men in their form. The houses in which we have been brought up

were steeped in memories of Crimea and Mutiny, of Afghanistan and the Sikh Wars, and those of our grandfathers, which we visited, spoke of the Peninsula and Waterloo, and even of Marlborough. The medals of generations have lain in the silver tables of the old ladies of the family, to be shown as great treasure to eager boys, who sucked in the tradition.

I had many generations of service behind me, and I was to boot brought up in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, in the heart of all the glory and pathos of Army tradition, where my father, John MacMunn, was the P.M.O. after Crimean and Mutiny service in the Royal Artillery, and my grandfather, George Mathias, was the Chaplain after many years' service as an officer in the 1st Royals and in the 79th Highlanders before he took orders and succeeded Robert Gleig, likewise an officer of the Dukes, who had become Chaplain-General.

And perhaps the scene in the Royal Hospital that I most remember is this: a small boy at an upstairs window looking out on those constant winter funerals of veterans, that formed below his nursery window—the hand-bier covered with the Jack and the empty three-cornered cocked hat atop. Twenty-four pairs of old toes slowly crunching the gravel behind, and one fife and one muffled drum, wailing out that glorious Christmas hymn, the *Adeste Fideles*, in the slowest of slow time, with all the rejoicing gone and only the pathos left. In the mustering of the veteran to his fathers, the last word in respectful mourning was the wail “O come, all ye faithful,” on the one shrill fife re-echoing through those old red corridors, and I have never forgotten it—the British Army going to its grave.

And among the officers and men with whom I was brought up were those who had served from Waterloo to Lucknow, old James McKay of the Forty-Twa, John Irby who had lost a leg in the Quarries at Inkerman,

Johnnie Green of the Rifle Brigade, all scars and wounds from the Mutiny, Field-Marshal Sir Patrick Grant, perhaps the finest figure of a man who had ever donned a British uniform, and so forth. Therefore, when in the year of grace 1888 I found myself a subaltern in the Royal Artillery, I was primed to the teeth with all the tradition of the Army, and looking on soldiering as the most wonderful of all the careers that a lad could look for. And I was not long to wait for it. In the autumn of that year I found myself accompanying the battery to which I had been posted, to Kirkee, in the East Indies, aboard the *Malabar*, blessed with a major of extreme outward ferocity and two senior subalterns whose reputations were second to none in the regiment, and who bit me suitably whenever I fell from their high standard, the which is an estimable upbringing to the young. Happily the genus "senior subaltern" is reviving, the lad with a bitter tongue and a sense of what an officer should be. He died in the French trenches for ten years and more, but at last *resurgat*, to the great advantage of Army and State.

It has been my lot, though a gunner, to spend close on thirty years in the East and twenty-five of them in India, partly by chance and largely by desire, and to achieve part of my ambition to walk in the footsteps of Lord Roberts, by sitting in his seat as Quartermaster-General in India. Every day in the East had been one of intense enjoyment, for the glamour and especially the romance of the British in India has ever seized me. When I was a small boy my nurse was the widow of a sergeant of the 32nd, and she had been with her husband in the Defence of Lucknow; I was always told that I would sit for hours while she spoke of India and the Mutiny, so that the East has almost been a "complex" to me. Four campaigns in India—years on the Frontiers—three years of the South African Campaign—Gallipoli, the drawing up of the plans for the

evacuation—Sinai for a short while—three years on the Tigris and Euphrates organizing the hundreds of miles of communications behind Maude and Marshall—a year in Mesopotamia as Commander-in-Chief and thereby the head of the Military Government there—operations in Persia and Kurdistan, against those shrill-voiced Carduchi of whom Xenophon wrote—four years' hard labour as the first peace Quartermaster-General in India after the War, with a new administrative world to build—is an interesting vista to look back on. Some recognition came, too, to assure one that one's country is worth serving and one's boyhood's dreams not all gone in smoke—recommended by Lord Roberts for the Victoria Cross and a D.S.O. at three years' service—three brevets—and a rise from regimental major to *pukka* Major-General in two years—the Legion of Honour and a kiss on both cheeks from a French General—the Companionship of the Bath and the Knighthood as immediate rewards, and then the glory of the Star of India, and I feel that perhaps the dreams and prayers of that small boy who looked through that window on the veteran's funeral have not been all smoke. That I may not be inferior to the veterans among whom I was reared, I too have been shot on the Chinese Frontier and blown up with a Krupp shell in South Africa. With the gates of memory open, I would fain yarn of all the choice young men and goodly who have ridden with me and of those who have fallen by the way, and of the good staunch Atkins and Flinnagan, by whose good support one has climbed, of Ram Buksh and Suchet Singh, of Thappa the Gurkha and Dhyan Singh the Dogra, and those good generals and seniors from whom one has learnt.

Much would I love to recall at length those early days in India and all those who helped one and sometimes kicked one along the Army road. Roger Massie and Charles Stevens, the brother subalterns, with whom

I have shot the length and breadth of the Deccan; Bannatyne Allason the adjutant, who made the slacker smell hell; Ted Hobday our captain the gifted; Potts my second major, prince of horse-masters and turn-out, known as the "Painter" because he began to paint his equipment when he heard of a German Prince who was to be accorded a review; and many another, many, alas, dead in France, behind that bar-sinister to all memories.

But the World War has so dwarfed the earlier doings, it must be to that and the happenings that may interest the younger generation that I must hurry on, and but wave the hand of remembrance to the grizzled drafts of years gone by, and the past-masters who wait for one on the eighth square.

And then as Kingsley sang :

"When all the world is old, lad, and all the leaves are brown,
And all the sport is dull, lad, and all the works run down,
Creep home and take your place then the old and lame among."

INDIA

I have often tried to recapture to the full the charm and romance of that first landing and early days in India—the night ashore at Watson's Hotel—the crows, and the plantains' leaves waving in the early dawn after the eternal racket of the old troopships—the first bungalow with fellow-subalterns—the stables and the pony dealers—the *dirsees* and the men with leather goods—a *shikari*, the one whom no one will employ wanting to take you shooting—the fountain in front of the porch—the squirrels in the verandah—the snake-charmer and conjurer who scented the new-comers, all vultures round the carrion—colour, romance, the undying East, and your new bearer saying, "Master never minding, I telling that man coming some other day."

The real glamour soon wears off in the round of regi-

mental duties, and yet it is but the portal to far more glamour for Mr. Eyes. For Mr. No-Eyes the polo ground, the barracks, and the mess-house form a padded room of his own.

The cantonment to which we went, I and old L/2 which was soon to be the 55th Field Battery, was the always delightful and unchanging gunner station of Kirkee—I say unchanging because I inspected it thirty years afterwards when Quartermaster-General and could not find that even the missing tiles in the roofs had been replaced. But then India, or at any rate cantonmental India, does not change, for I remember saying to an old uncle, a general leaving India, “What was it like before the Mutiny when you came out?” and he said, “Oh, very much like it is now, except that you young fellows wear such beastly clothes.”

To the chagrin of my father's old horse artillery friends I soon put my name down for native mountain artillery, chiefly because I was agog to see the frontiers, but also because to the amusement and horror of my friends I had got engaged to be married—oh! yes, the same wife as now—and wanted the extra pay.

The Gunner Mess at Kirkee is perhaps the best in India, and I believe that the mess-table is the veritable one on which the bodies of the officers of the 24th Foot had been laid out after Chillianwallah. In those spacious days the long many-leaved polished mess-tables went into the field on the bullock hackeries. The Mess in Mutiny days had belonged to the 14th Light Dragoons, who sold the table when they left the place, and it became a gunner station.

Charles Stevens, my brother subaltern, and I developed a delightful hobby of exploring with gun and sometimes rod, the old fortresses of Mogul and Mahratta times that frowned down on us from many crags on the mountains round. Buddhist caves and rock temples too were among them, and we spent many

profitable week-ends in places hardly visited since they were reduced in the Pindari and Mahratta War of 1817/19.

In the underground rock temple near Bamlurda we ran into a very angry and saturnine priest or devotee. Mr. Lee Warner told me that he was pretty certain that he was one of the Nana's entourage from Cawnpore, long "wanted" by Government, who had reappeared in his old age, but who was not worth taking merely to revive a now-healed sore. Curiously enough, it was from that very temple from which the Ganeshkind murders were engineered a few years later, cruel, bitter murders of two British officers in the panic of the first incidence of plague.

THE BALUCHISTAN FRONTIER

In 1891 I found myself posted to No. 5 Bombay Mountain Battery far up on the Afghan Frontier, and hearing that they bestrode chestnut Arabs and wore lion-tamer boots I provided myself with both. A vet friend found me one of the largest with a tail of great merit, from the Bombay stables at a subaltern's price by some *jadu*. By these means I arrived in the odour of sanctity at my new battery far away from the railway line, in the wild and picturesque mountain-girt station of Loralai, to be welcomed by that finest and hardest of mountain gunners, Fred De Butts, killed later in Tirah at the head of his battery.

On my way up at a rest-house in one of the passes, I was shown into the common room to find a lady with golden hair down her back, and her skirts rolled to her knees. Knees in those days were not the common objects of to-day, and, a simple subaltern, I withdrew; however, I was invited in cheerily to share the log fire. Then came in Colonel Nicholson and formally presented his wife, no less a celebrity of later days to come than "Lawrence Hope," a sister of "Victoria

Cross." She and the General, as he became later, were well-known characters of the old days, round whom many yarns centred. He was then raising a new Afghan battalion of proper young cut-throats. Tall and stately with a hawk face and fierce eyes, he had many of the attributes of his namesake. The story then most current was that at a recent parade at which the Colonel was inspecting the recruits wearing side-arms, a Kakur lad had stepped forth and tried to stab him with his bayonet. The former carried a huge oak stick which he swung round, catching the lad on the knuckles and sending the weapon hurling away. With a "Fall in, you fool!" he passed on.

I was to sniff the grim side of Frontier life pretty soon, for actually in the Loralai Bazaar a day or two after my arrival, a British master-armourer buying fruit was stabbed by a fanatic and died to make a Kakur hoilday.

THE CHINESE BORDER

But I was not long to remain in Loralai, for now came news that in No. 6 Mountain Battery a subaltern had died of malaria and I was to take his place, so with my chestnut Arab and his tail and my bearer and *sais* and all my goods, I marched down once again with great regret, for Bhamo, far up the Irrawaddi, close under the hills of China.

And I was about to fall into the great adventure of my life and much honour therefrom. The travel all through India in winter and across from Calcutta to Rangoon, four days' sea, and thence up to Mandalay, was fascinating enough; but then came best of all a journey by river steamer to Bhamo itself. On board the steamer was the Commandant of No. 6, Captain G. B. Smith, later in the finale of his prime to command the artillery in Kut, and as a Brigadier-General to eat his heart out for the best years of the World War in

a Prisoners of War Camp, a sad end to the career of a man who started his soldiering in Kandahar in '79. From him I learnt that I had still a long way to go, and that my section of two guns, whose officer, Lieutenant Boyd, had died of malaria, was far away north of Bhamo with the Irrawaddi Column under Major Yule of the Devons, up among the Kachins of the Confluence.

So Bhamo proved to be but the beginning of my wandering, for the guns I was to command seemed like the egg that Alice bought in the fifth square. And this time I packed my faithful trio into the tiniest of launches, and we forced our way up the rocky gorges of the Third Defile, arriving at long last by river and road at Myitkhyina, "The-Town-of-Big-Fish," fish which in those savage days we used to poach with dynamite. At The-Town-of-Big-Fish I found a commandant with soldiers inside a spiked stockade, who told me that my particular gunner egg was on the top shelf still far away and that I must find it for myself, but that first I must march for the newly-built post of Sadon, four marches away into the hills under the great "Pums" that marked the frontier of China. Also was I told that I must take command of a convoy of stores urgently required at Sadon, with a party of a dozen Gurkha mounted infantry and a native officer.

But here a younger generation may want to know "What 'twas all about." The story is somewhat in this wise: After the annexation of Upper Burma, the British had steadily settled the riverine country and then the wilder hill tracts, and were now engaged in putting a stop to all marauding by the less accessible tribes whom the Burmans never could control, and who had levied undue blackmail on traders' caravans for generations. It was to the mending of these gentlemen's ways that the Irrawaddi Column, of which my guns formed part, was devoted. By all accounts the

tribes, who were some of the groups of the Kachin race, egged on by Chinese pirates across the border, were by no means pleased at the prospects of the Pax Britannica. All, however, was for the moment lovely in the garden, and the column was far away across "The Confluence" of the two great branches which formed the Irrawaddi, having left its sick and details at Sadon, a word pronounced to rhyme with "atone."

THE ROAD TO SADON

What the Kachins did or did not think about it troubled me little enough, and eagerly I swam my little party of mules and ponies over the river, and started on my march into the mountains. Very beautiful was the mountain trail, as it ran along the level jungles for a while, and then climbed up into the thick forest and waving bamboos, while jungle fowl and partridge whirled under our noses. For two days we climbed away and bivouacked peacefully enough, and started without ado on the last stage but one from Sadon. Here the Indian officer asked my leave to ride straight through with four men, as he had tobacco and letters for his own officers of the military police. All was quiet, he urged, and no one would molest us, and indeed so it seemed, so I let him go.

The day was hot and drowsy, insects droned and hardly a leaf stirred as with my convoy and the eight remaining troopers we wound our way down a very steep path towards the Namli River, which we could hear on the stony bed below. My Arab stumbled behind me after the manner of Arabs, his reins over my arm, and I remember to this day wondering if any power on earth would make me mount and canter down that hill-side. Far below in the jungles a shot would echo, said to be the villagers scaring deer from their buckwheat.

Then something scurried round the corner, and I

beheld in front of me one of the Gurkhas of the jemadar's party. He had lost his snider carbine and his Kilmarnock cap, his Mongolian eyes were like teacups, his round little Burman pony was pulled up on its haunches as the boy looked up at me and shouted, "*Bahuti Daku nadi men!*"—"There are many dacoits in the river!"—and then tried to explain how, riding unsuspecting into the ford, they had been greeted with a volley from some new entrenchments on the opposite bank, his pony had been shot and his carbine lost, so they had sent him back with the news.

That was enough to banish the respect for the steep path. Below I could now recognize the muffled noises of the sullen carbines. Scrambling on my horse and taking four more of the men, we slithered down that road to the thick undergrowth of the river bank, and I crawled to where the native officer was lying with two of his Gurkhas, and peered at the opposite bank some 80 yards away. Phew! what a skit of trenches! and from them spat the musketry that was ripping through the leaves on our side of the water—logs, stone walls, split bamboo revetments, for some distance above or below the ford which was itself none too easy—the longer you looked the less you liked it—no good hanging about. So I left the jemadar where he was to fire steadily, while I slipped downstream where a small island looked as if it might help one in a scramble across that would enable us to get on the flank of the trenches. Away we went slipping into the stream opposite the islet. It was deep and boulder-strewn and full in view of the enemy, who let us have it, splash and splutter, till scared but unharmed by what was a very real *baptême de feu* for all of us—all lads—we lay dripping and breathless, waiting to make a second rush that should carry us over. Half a dozen of the Kachins behind a fallen tree had slipped away into the water as we had climbed out. After a few

minutes I called to my drenched little otter hounds, and we plunged into the stream again, this time with every available piece turned on us to the accompaniment of shouting, of abuse and the banging of gongs.

Again fortune held us scathless, and we scrambled up the bank and started to enfilade the enemy trenches, and, as our breath returned, to cheer like mad. Then cheering again we rushed on to the flank of a big reveted work, and that finished it. There was a wail and a scuttle of blue skirts, and we cheered once more to the answering shouts of our party opposite. Then to assemble, collect the convoy, and discuss the position! Fourteen fighting men all told, two and a half stages completed, one and a half still ahead! What was to be done? I sat like a master among his pack of hounds and the jemadar urged that the whole countryside must be in rebellion, that the Chinese must be over, for there were rifles among the muskets, and only Chinese could make such revetments as those of the trenches we had just captured. He advised return! But I was a d——d cantankerous Irishman, and with those confident little otter hounds around me in no mood to go back. On! would be the order, and as we were too few to bivouac we must go straight through the remaining march and a half to Sadon. The Gurkha faces said, Aye, aye!

So we assembled the convoy, and proceeded to climb up out of the Namli Valley a thousand feet and more till we came to the village of Kritu. It is too long to dwell on how from that village onwards a crowd of tribesmen followed us, firing at our rear party, slipping in on our flanks for many miles, and as we marched our rearward files kept up a sullen fire. Eight miles on we approached a stream, the Tingri Kha, where our column had been opposed on first entering the country, and here in the disused stockades we expected to catch it. But no! all quiet, and we passed

through them and on round a corner. Then a volley rapped out in front of us, and the jemadar fell, shot through the chest. Eighty yards ahead was a high reveted stockade across the road with protruding bamboo loopholes. The Gurkhas, skirmishers by instinct, jumped aside into the jungle, and as I followed a musket ball caught me in the arm. That was soon put right, and leaving three men with the wounded jemadar I took three down into the thick undergrowth, intending to work up behind the stockade, the jemadar calling to us when to turn upwards. Up we came to the sound of beaten gongs and defiant shouts. But our direction was wrong. The Gurkha in front of me, who was hacking a path up a very steep slope, slipped; using his shoulder as stepping-stone I swung myself up to find myself on the track, but immediately up against the stockade on the wrong side. The only thing to do was to climb it, and I got myself on top with a firm foothold, blazing with my revolver into a mass of shouting blue-clad tribesmen armed with guns and spears, who fired and threw the latter as two of my little lads clambered up beside me and loosed off their carbines. That was the end of it and the enemy vanished into the jungle. We cleared the road, collected the convoy, tied up our wounds and started on. Far away on a distant hill-top we could now see the fort of Sadon, where we expected to win our way that night, and from which, said the men, an outpost in the village of Sadon was furnished, and as we looked fire opened from another breastwork in front of us and a bit downhill. Too tired to outflank this new obstacle, we rushed cheering and entered it as the enemy fled after an ineffective volley.

On and on we now pushed, still fired at, till nightfall found us at the Sadon-Kha, to find the sapper bridge destroyed, and the ford spiked, while, as we searched for spikes, muskets squibbed at us from all sides.

Struggling up to Sadon village, and turning into a street, every hut seemed to blaze at us. The men's ponies and the pack mules here stampeded, and with ammunition almost finished we staggered up the last 500 feet to where we hoped our garrison might still be on their perch, a fact of which I had begun to have a sickening doubt. But at last there before our eyes stood up the profile of our own stockade, clear-cut against the starry sky. Would they fire at us ? They had not expected us. We tried a cheer, a happy hysterical tired men's cheer that had some difficulty in getting beyond "hip-hip——" And then came a bugle call to advance, and an answering cheer, and the spiked gate arose and men surged out, and I found myself carried on men's shoulders to the Commandant, one Harrison, a sapper subaltern of my acquaintance in far-away peaceful India, a very stout soldier. And that was that. For three days the tribes for miles round and many Chinese Blackflags had surged round the post, in which were 130 or so details and invalids of the column which had marched away to the North, and the women and children of the Gurkha's garrison to be. It was ten days more of a fairly desperate defence before another column from the South came to our assistance. And that is a story of a day's adventure in the British Army and incidentally my own *baptême de feu*.

It was a column under Captain Davies of the Devons that relieved us, and then came up the Commander-in-Chief from Burma, Sir Richard Stewart, and Mat. Gossett, the Brigadier in Mandalay, and to my surprise I was to be made a fuss of. The force paraded on a long spur, the garrison of Sadon on the right, and my little party in the post of honour on the right of all. I was fallen out, and General Stewart, a Mutiny man and a friend of Bobs, said I should have the Victoria Cross. The Commander-in-Chief in Madras and Lord

Roberts the Commander-in-Chief in India were good enough to recommend me for the Cross, and the Government of India sent home a despatch anent the matter, but the Duke of Cambridge gave me the D.S.O. instead, otherwise in 1929 I too might have dined with H.R.H. Lord Roberts was good enough to order a copy of his recommendation to be sent to me.

My Sikh jemadar, who was shot through the lung, received the Order of Merit, and I tried to get it for four of my rank and file. Government replied that my party all merited it, but as highly paid military policemen they could not expect to share to the full in a soldier's reward!

All that summer and autumn I remained in garrison at Sadon and returned to Bhamo in the winter to find the battery gone to India. June saw me out in the mountains again with the expedition to Sima some 50 miles south of Sadon, where the military police were in trouble, and in July we were to return. Here my friend Masters of the 1st Gurkhas was killed, and Lloyd the doctor gained the V.C.

CHAPTER II

KASHMIR AND THE FRONTIER

BACK TO INDIA AND THE FRONTIER

FROM Bhamo I took my lads across to Poona once again, and I found the rest of the battery in the Wanourie lines with our mess in the historic bungalow, that was in pre-Mutiny days the headquarters of the Bombay Horse Artillery, a delight to reflect on. Then I committed matrimony, marrying in the Nilgerry Hills, after being scolded by the "Gat" ¹ for my pains, the eldest daughter of Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Watson, of the Bombay Army, to whom I had been engaged for some years. My father-in-law was one of the few really accomplished linguists in India, Urdu, Hindi and Arabic being his special forte. To this day the notes he constantly wrote out for me contain information and ideas rarely to be met with elsewhere.

In a few weeks we were to return to the North-West Frontier at romantic Loralai, a pretty rough place for a lass in those days, but a good inoculation for knock-about ways. And eventually I marched my wife up through the snow and among the hairy scoundrels of the border. But no sooner were we ensconced in mud quarters than an entirely new rôle presented itself. I was offered the appointment of Inspecting Officer of the Kashmir Imperial Service Artillery at what, in those days, was the princely salary of Rs. 500 a month, too good to be sneezed at, so once again my sojourn at Loralai was to be cut short. My lady having come

¹ Brigadier-General William Gatacre.

from the Nilgerries to Poona, a long three-day rail and drive, and thence, after three months, by sea to Karachi and by rail and route march up into the thrice wild corners of Baluchistan, was now to complete her knockabout training by marching down to the rail in heavy snow, and thence to the ancient city of Jammu, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir—admirable training for a soldier's lass.

And after many days we found ourselves, one January morning, climbing out of the train at the terminus on the River Tawi to look up on a great mass of snowy mountains and see before us the heavily castellated city of Jammu on a hill overhanging the river, a forest of temple domes and spires topping the grey bastions, and the cold Punjab wind coming down the gorge in our faces. I knew nothing of Jammu and what it was all about, but I found that three officers were stationed here training the Kashmir troops. The officer I was relieving had come to meet me and was a little disturbed to find that a lady had emerged from the train with her furbelows and what-nots, but we were received into the official guest-house of the Maharajah, and a small bungalow put at our disposal.

THE IMPERIAL SERVICE TROOPS

The story of the Imperial Service Troops is a romantic one, and most people realize that they are in some sort the troops of the Indian Princes. But there is a good deal more to it than that, and it is worth relating, especially as here at Jammu we found ourselves in a world far removed from busy British India, and touching in some ways an ancient past and also the romantic scallywag days of the European adventurers who served the native States a century or so ago. During the break-up of the great Mogul Empire of India, which centred at Delhi and reached

to Kabul and Kashmir, the various principalities formed by revolting Moslem Viceroys or disintegrating tributaries, entertained large mercenary armies to war with each other, and to withstand the rising power of the British or French. Before long they tried to organize them on the European model and called to their aid many Europeans of both high and low grade. Most of these armies at one time tried issues with the British, to their undoing, the last time being the Sikh War of 1848/9. Defeated, the Princes concerned settled down to their place in the British Commonwealth, with armies more or less limited by treaty. During the Mutiny, while most of the Princes were faithful to their engagements, their armies were not so, largely it was thought because the line of least resistance had been followed in enlisting the popular time-honoured universal soldier of India who hailed from Oude, rather than their own subjects. The fever of mutiny was born in Oude and the soldiery of the States followed that trend rather than the lead of their own employers.

After the Mutiny the Princes continued to maintain considerable forces which the march of improvement in military equipment left far outside the range of military usefulness, yet withal often underpaid and discontented, and more numerous than State finances warranted. Their existence was a problem which had long perplexed the Government of India in the interests of all concerned. During the Afghan War of '78/80, the States had offered the services of their somewhat ragamuffin and merely ornamental troops. In the anxious time of the Penjdeh war-scare their offers were redoubled, with handsome offers of cash to assist in the defence of the land. Then the Indian Foreign Office had a brilliant idea. "Let us suggest that instead of money a portion of the States' troops should be so trained and equipped that they shall always be valuable for the service of the Empire." From this

germ sprung the Imperial Service Troops, trained by British officers, equipped from British arsenals, and paid by the States. Chiefs responded heartily, and before long every State furnished a quota, being encouraged to substitute a smaller number of efficient troops for the inferior crowds that were always a potential danger. These troops were to be, with certain special exceptions, subjects of the chief they served, and therefore likely to respond to his sentiments.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Kashmir held a unique position in British India, it alone of all subject States being on the outer frontier, marching both with China and Russia as well as with Afghanistan. From the days of Gulab Singh of Jammu, for whose abstention from opposing us in the Sikh War of 1845/6 we gave the Sikh province of Kashmir, taken from the Sikh Durbar which could not pay the war indemnity for its evil invasion of India, there had been a large army in the State of Jammu and Kashmir modelled on the French trained regiments of the Khalsa. The famous *Gordana Sahib*, the Colonel Gardiner who sits in a dress of Cameron tartan in the frontispiece of Colonel Pearse's book, had lived many years in Jammu and cast their cannon, of which many still remain. Gulab Singh had dressed his men in the borrowed trappings of Europe, even to the sugar-loaf caps of the Prussian Imperial Guard, and the helmets and breastplates of the French Dragoons. The latter to this day appear on State occasions. From this army, ill-fed, ill-disciplined, underpaid, and a menace, Colonel Neville Chamberlain was busy in the early 'nineties making an organized remnant, part for Imperial Service and part "riglars" or "regulars," still armed with percussion muzzle-loaders. The old officers could still drill their men in French, so hard died the

tradition of the French dominion that failed. Among the "riglars" was a battery of six-pounder brass guns that were a joy to behold and which really could bound across the plain. Their commandant wore a laced "jacket," and would turn out all his men to beat for pig, so that they really were a valuable unit, and they fired their guns with a coil of smouldering rope! The Imperial Service contingent was a large one for the State revenues, no less than six battalions of infantry, two mountain batteries, and a squadron of cavalry. Half of this served on the Empire's Pamir Frontier at Gilgit, and just before I had come there had been the Hunza Campaign with the dramatic storming of Nilt, in which Kashmir troops had taken part, especially some Gurkhas in the Jammu service, a relic of the days when the Nepalese served the Sikhs. It was all a very unusual business, and I found myself busy raising and remodelling a mountain battery that was to march to Gilgit in a few months' time, half the men not yet enlisted, few of the animals yet bought or trained. Under the snows amid the old grim bastions and the city temples it was hard to realize one was an officer of a modern army, and wore a khaki jacket, and looking back it was a period of strange romance. In three months' time we started to march to Gilgit, my wife alternating pony and *jhampam*, and I saddling, I think, every mule myself, till my men could learn the difficult job of girthing a mule tight enough to keep his load steady and his saddle from slipping.

And so up from the plains over the Chenab we went, sleeping on the floor in Akhnoor Fort, cutting into the old Imperial road to Kashmir, and at last arriving in the Happy Valley, and thence up to the great dour Gilgit passes, whence I brought back another battery to be remodelled. The one I left there, No. 1 Kashmir, was to distinguish itself a year later under C. G.



NO. 1 KASHMIR MOUNTAIN BATTERY ON THE ROAD TO GILGIT, 1894
This battery accompanied Col. Kelly on his march to Chitral in 1895. The Sergeant on the left (Dharram Singh) carried a gun alone for 2 miles over the snow on the Shandour Pass, 14,000 feet above sea.

THE FLYING BULLET DOWN THE PASS 21

Stewart in Colonel Kelly's famous march to relieve Chitral.

Life among the Dogras, who form the ruling race of Jammu and Kashmir, was full of fascination. There was heaps to do, and among other things the artillery drill books had to be translated into Urdu. It was a wild life, broken by occasional visits to Salkot and Lahore, or to the Punjab districts to buy mules.

A year or so passed in this work, and then I was to take a hand in quite a fresh vista of active service.

THE FLYING BULLET DOWN THE PASS

This next vignette of soldiering will carry us to a very different terrain, still east of Suez up among the great stony mountains of the wild hills that lie between the Punjab and Afghanistan proper, hills that never bowed their head to any King of mountain Kabul, or Emperor of Delhi, not even the Great Mogul in all his glory. It is 1897 and the drum ecclesiastic is rolling through the mountain-side. "Glory for all and Heaven for those who bleed!"

Elation at the success of Turk over Christian in Europe, certain advances along caravan routes in the cause of law and order and trade protection by the British, some intrigues from Kabul, and such like, had brought all the border tribes out in rebellion for many hundred miles of the Frontier, now at one point, now at another, and it had taken close on 60,000 troops to stem the flood.

In August, '97, however, there had been little more than the isolated trouble in Waziristan in which De Bret of my old battery, No. 6 Bombay, had distinguished himself in helping in the remnants of Bunny's force ambushed in the Tochi. Brown, commanding the battery, the son of the famous and original "Buster," had been among the killed. I had come down from Kashmir to Jammu, leaving my missis in Pindi, to

square up my kit before leaving for my first leave Home after nine years in the Shiny. But man proposes, and suddenly the whole of Swat was flinging itself against the British posts on the Malakand, and the Army, with its officers and men on furlough, was trying to mobilize. Before the troops could assemble the Mohmands were "raising Cain" in British territory and were struggling with the Peshawar garrison on the plains of Shubkhadr. As more troops were moving to that point, the Afridis were rumbling in the Khaiber, and the tribes of the Orakzais were pouring into the Kurram and Miranzai Valleys and attacking the police and military outposts on the Samana.

A telegram reached me to proceed at once to Ferozepur and there join the Jaipur Imperial Service Transport Corps coming up from the south under Cookson. This I did, stopping to buy two mares in Lahore, to find, to my consternation, that I was joining a corps of "entire" ponies.

We were hurried to Kushalgarh to proceed to Miranzai, where organized transport was badly needed—indeed, in those days there was none in India. The heat was great and the rail did not cross the Indus. We filled up with stores, 500 carts drawn by a pair of ponies each, and marched hard to supply the force under General Yateman Biggs, who was trying to relieve the posts on the Samana and protect Miranzai. On the heights above we could see the mountain guns shelling the tribesmen, and the banners on the hill-tops. Alas! the outpost of the 36th Sikhs at Saragarhi fell, to be massacred to a man; but Gulistan, in which was the wife and family of Major Des Voeux, who commanded, she being too ill of her confinement to be moved, after prolonged defence, was happily relieved. It was intensely hot and many stories came to us of the British troops' sufferings. The Royal Irish Regiment was largely under attached officers at

first, and few knew the art of getting men along in great heat. To-day with our shorts and our open-necked shirts without jackets, the matter is much simpler.

Between Kohat and Hangu we found that the Royal Scots Fusiliers were having a difficult fight with another lot of tribes at the Ublan Pass to cover Kohat itself. Several regiments of Indian cavalry were moving up, too, to protect Miranzai and Kurram, and the business now in hand, Government shamed perhaps by public opinion, had decided that the behaviour of the Orakzais and Afridis could not be borne, and that it would lift the hitherto inviolate Afridi *purdah* or curtain, and exact reparation in the heart of their own highlands of which they used to boast so loudly.

I received orders to return to Jammu and mobilize No. 1 Kashmir Mountain Battery, which was to join the force, and hastily left the Jaipurs, whose ordered disciplined columns of carts on the march had attracted much praise and attention. Those who remember the sentiments of the older generation of officers will be amused at my father's writing to say that "he did not much like this Carter Patterson business," as he called our beautiful cart train!

The British were to enter Tirah, not up the long narrow valleys that led from the Indus, but from far up in the wide Miranzai Valley, by scaling the far passes and taking the long valleys in reverse—an admirable conception likely to minimize the formidable resistance to be expected—and the troops to do the work were concentrations from all quarters.

Into the midst of this gathering I marched at the head of No. 1 Kashmir Mountain Battery, and a remarkable and martial sight it was. One division was marching over the Kohat Pass from Peshawar, the other was already in Miranzai,—we could see the long winding columns and pack animals zig-zagging down

the mountain-side,—and the whole place was seething with pack artillery, with mules and with camels.

We were pushed up, at once, some three marches to the point below the great pass of the Chagru Kotal, which leads to the Afridi Tirah by way of the Orakzai uplands, and to this day the memory of those crowding échelons of all arms stirs my memory, the jinkity-jink of the gun mules, the Bengal Lancers with their pennons flying high above the acrid dust, and long strings of commissariat camels padding softly by right and left of the roadway. With my échelon, lilted by a battalion of the Frontier Force to that lawless Kabul lovesong "*Zakhmi Dil*,"—"The Bleeding Heart,"—we swung out in the early hours beneath the great grey bastions and the forty-pounder guns that frowned therefrom on the turbulent city of Kohat, and ere long found ourselves in bivouac on the rolling plain of Shinawri, below the ridge and heights of Dargai, a few thousand yards ahead and high above. The top of the heights bristled with tribal banners, and in the telescope lens defiant tribesmen danced derision atop the rocky ledges that crowned them.

The campaign lasted many months, and I will but try and crystallize our principal dramatic action, as we who looked and waited saw it with our glasses.

THE STORMING OF DARGAI

It was now necessary to take that army over the pass called the Chagru Kotal, after climbing the long ascent that was not yet passable to anything less agile than the pack mule, wind under the dominating Dargai Heights, and descend into the dark commanded gorges which lead to the Khanki Valley below. But the Dargai Heights were well within rifle range of the roadway at the top of the Kotal, seven hundred feet above, whence waved the banners of defiance and where danced the tribes on their lofty eminence.

The British Commander very soon was seized of the fact that, whether he liked it or whether he did not, he must storm those heights before he could get his long strings of transport over the Kotal. Want of confidence is not a British failing, and Sir William Lockhart made no doubt that his admirable troops would make short work of them. But he rather counted without his host and his terrain, despite the fact that it had already been reconnoitred. Highlanders and linesmen, Sikhs and Gurkhas were at his disposal, and everything seemed lovely in the garden. Many hours before dawn on October the 20th in the year of grace 1897 the troops commenced the ascent of the pass.

The leading brigade, which was to storm the heights, was commanded by Brigadier Kempster and consisted of the Gordon Highlanders, the Dorsets, the 36th Sikhs and the 1/2 Gurkhas. The Gurkhas were to lead, supported by the Dorsets, and so that the Brigadier should not draw too heavily on his own battalions at that stage, the Derbys were lent him also. From the top of the pass a long narrow ridge connected with the heights, running parallel with them for some hundreds of yards, and then was joined to the foot of the actual cliffs by a narrow neck with steep sides that fell away to the gorges below. Until this neck was reached the attackers were more or less under cover, but as they emerged on the neck they would be swept by hundreds of rifles posted on the cliffs above. The rest of the division was now crowded on the Chagru Kotal and as far as the eye could see long lines of transport animals stood under their load, and down in the plains below tens of thousands more waiting for the leading troops to clear the way.

Three mountain batteries perched on the Kotal, "a wheel on the hour of the morning, a wheel on the edge of the pit," commenced to bombard the heights, and

another high up on the Sukh above, joined in, but at extreme range. Then suddenly Colonel Travers and his leading Gurkhas dashed out on to the neck and gained the cover of a mass of overhanging rock ! The riflemen above had not expected it, but now hundreds of muzzles were turned on this sole alleyway of the neck that lay below them, "bare as the paunch of the purser's sow." But in vain more men tried to join Colonel Travers so that he might attempt to scale the now defiant heights ! In vain, officer after officer tried to lead and to dribble his men over ! A storm of rifle bullets swept them away and the fallen rolled down the precipitous slopes of the neck. The waiting army saw little of the trouble and waxed impatient. The Dorsets came up to give the Gurkhas a lead which they did not in the least want, only to be swept away by the hail from above. In vain the little seven-pounder guns swept the cliff-tops with rafale on rafale of spattering shrapnel. The Afridi marksmen were too snugly cuddled into clefts in the rocks to worry. Still the flying bullet down the pass was master and cold steel and fixed bayonets had no say. The brigadier swore, not at his troops who were doing their best, but at the difficulties which had not been foreseen. Up on the Kotal, the divisional general was much concerned ; here was he blocking the movement of the whole army, the hours were slipping away, and he was due to have his division assembled in the Khanki valley that night and pass God-alone-knows how many thousand transport animals over the Kotal too. Orders were sent to the brigadier to persevere, and the artillery re-doubled their efforts. The Derbys then tried their hand, but naturally the little parties as they appeared were swept away. Brave and confident company leaders tried in vain in scornful succession. The hours were ticking on, the morning coolness was long past, it was furiously hot, the narrow paths were choc-a-

block with wounded and ammunition mules. The transport animals, who had been many hours under their loads, were collapsing where they stood, to the no small addition to the congestion, and échelons of fresh artillery ammunition were struggling to pass for the front. High twelve and nothing yet gained. One o'clock! Two o'clock! My kingdom for some one who'll take those heights! The troops are stale and weary! Let the guns do their best, their little seven-pound best, and then let the Gordons and Sikhs try!

And it was so. The wrong Sikh regiment followed, the 3rd and not the 36th. Never mind! None better for the job! The Gordons leading the new troops who were to get a move on struggled through the jamb, and Colonel Mathias assembled his battalion in the little hollow whence the start for the neck commenced. Peering out on to the corpse-strewn neck, Travers and the first few who had got over in safety were clearly visible hugging their narrow patch of cover.

High above the shrapnel was ineffectively playing on the cliff edge a hundred yards away. Now and again if a soul stirred a wisp of bullets flipped into the grey shale on the neck.

D——d unpleasant, thought the Colonel. Then a bright thought came to him, or was suggested by some brighter lad at his side. "No good trying to dribble—be swept away with that volume of fire—must get over *en masse*—can't all be hit."

Glorious idea! The Colonel took it. The battalion was already crouched in close column in the hollow.

"The Gordon Highlanders will advance in close order! Officers and pipers to the front!"

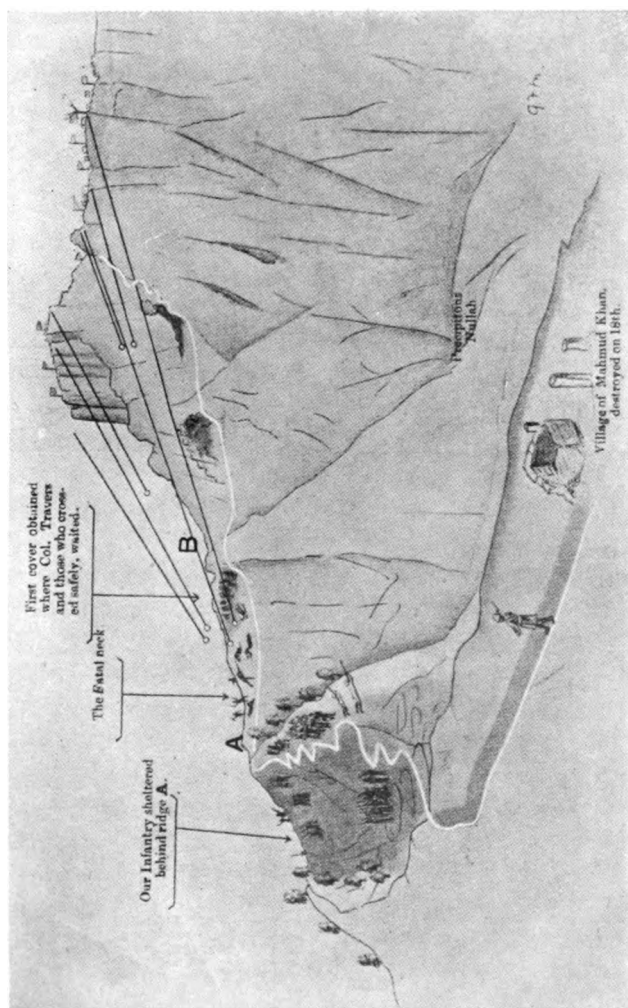
The pipe-major swung his plaid and his drones over his shoulder with a magnificent gesture, and struck up "Cock of the North," and then, with their colonel at their head as in the days of old, the Highlanders rushed forth and with them Sikhs and impatient remnants of

those who had tried before. Furious volleys swept from above, and many a bullet found its billet on that jostling crowded neck, but nothing could stop the rush. Breathlessly the watchers with telescope and glass watched the waving mass of kilts, and then saw them over the neck and scaling the many goat-paths that led up what was very like Beachy Head.

But so true it is that *L'audace et toujours l'audace* brings its own reward, that just as the real difficulties of the escalade were commencing, lo ! the tribes fled, fled with a wail of chagrin. The fierce *élan* of that rush *en masse*, added to the fact that it would be difficult now to shoot down at the climbers without exposing themselves to the shrapnel, clinched the matter. In ten minutes you could not see their heels for the dust, and when the leading three got up, Colonel Travers, a Highlander and a Sikh, the tribesmen were far down the terraced fields that formed the reverse slope.

And that was the storming of Dargai as we watched it through the waiting hours. The rest of the campaign dragged on for some months, and my poor friend Fred De Butts, of No. 5 Bombay Mountain, was shot at the head of it breasting a bluff at the Sampagha Pass. The actual winter I spent in the snow on the Samana and returned to Jammu in the spring.

The next year saw me a captain in a Siege Train Company at Gosport and Lydd, where I found the salt of the Artillery thought it lived. Deep in slide rules, the Siege Artillery had long mastered the principle of "exact observation," forced on the rest of the Artillery in the World War.



PANORAMA OF THE STORMING OF DARGAI

Sketch of Dargai as seen from the position of Nos. 1, 5 and 8 M.Bs., on the Chagru Kotal. Scale : about 1" = 110 yds. Path from Chagru Kotal shown in white. All loss occurred between A, B. (The black patches denote cover.)

CHAPTER III

THE BOER WAR AND THE WAZIRI BORDER

FULL SAIL TO TABLE BAY

THE South African War is of peculiar interest to all those who have studied British military organization, as it was the first time in which a mobilization scheme of any practical or modern value existed and had been put into effect. It was the first time in Great Britain the short-service system had been put to the test, and the reserves which were the essence of that system called out. And it may be said, to the honour of those organizers who had the task to do, that the passing from a peace to war footing worked excellently and that the reserve responded admirably and was a remarkable success. It may also be remarked that the Bay of Biscay is a fine sergeant-major, and that the reservist who passed through it had forgotten that he had ever left the ranks. It warmed one's enthusiasm to see the spirit in which the reservists, many in good employment, came up, and it gave the lie once for all to the croakers who declared half our reserve to be in the United States. The second day saw me leaving my siege train and *en route* to raise and take command of the howitzer portion of the corps ammunition column at Woolwich. Two subalterns were to join me and three specially promoted staff sergeants; the remainder would be reservists. Lieutenant A. A. Montgomery ¹ as one of the subalterns

¹ Now Sir Archibald Montgomery-Massingbird, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

and a prince among quartermaster-sergeants, Springate by name, joined me, and in a couple of weeks we were ready to sail "thirty thousand horse and foot full sail to Table Bay." Some may remember the sorry tubs the first lot embarked on, before the Admiralty were men enough to take up decent ships and escape from old tradition. There was a foolish outcry in our press, however, at the dismounted troops going first, when mounted men were badly needed. The practical answer to that was that while a transport for infantry can be got ready in twenty-four hours, the fitting of horse ships with stalls and water tanks for a long voyage takes a considerable time, quite a different proposition from a few hours over the Channel. As it was, one or two of the artillery-horse ships had their fittings carried away in bad weather, resulting in a horrid jam of broken horses in the scuppers. Some may remember our running without lights off the Azores for fear of an Irish-American privateer that rumour had let loose.

The mass of Buller's force went to Natal, but we followed Methuen to Table Bay and moved up through the Karoo. My trumpeter, a pink-cheeked piece of impudence, attracted considerable attention, and I remember seeing him being carried off to dine at a railway restaurant by a big farmer, the young monkey winking at his pals and clattering his sword as he went up the platform. The horrible dust-trap of De Aar was our first halt; as one went it was interesting to hear the talk of the "farmers," as the enemy were called in Cape Colony, being on this or that row of kopjes. Methuen had had his successful fights at Belmont, Honey-nest Kloof, and Modder River, and the Boers had met their first shock in finding that the *Roi-Batjes*¹ were *Khaki-Batjes*, that the red coats and white cross-belts of earlier tradition no longer

¹ Red-jackets.

lay before them and that a trained skirmisher in khaki was not so simple a target.

It was not till Methuen had run into Cronje at Magersfontein that my unit was called on, and I sent up Archie Montgomery for the fag end of that little reverse. The total loss was so small that soldiers of to-day will always wonder how it happened that the Highland Brigade failed, despite the first swish of rifle-fire that met them half deployed in the dark. It was my business to be the first to survey the position after Cronje had fled, and submit a sketch and report. Certain it was that no barbed wire had existed, and that what had appeared as such was a farm fence running somewhat obliquely across the front of the Boer trench to which a few empty tins had been hung.

Before Lord Roberts started on his strategic march that relieved Kimberley my ammunition column had been broken up, and I found myself posted as captain to Ker Montgomery, then commanding the 37th Battery, which was part of Methuen's division. While Lord Roberts was assembling his Grand Army, rumour was busy in the camps of how Piet Cronje was to be done in. As all the world knows, the Chief moved wide on our right by Jacobsdal and the drifts higher up. There was a reservist from Trufts in my battery who cut our hair, and it was he who said to me, "Don't you think, sir, as how Lord Roberts should go round by this 'ere Jacobs-Town?" And so he did. The assembling troops in their bivouacs sang while they waited, and this is what they sang:

"Who killed Paul Kruger?"

"Who'll dig his grave? 'I,' said Baden-Powell,
'With my spade and trowel, I'll dig his grave.'

"Who'll sing his dirge? 'I,' said Lord Methuen,
'For I know the tūen (*sic*). I'll sing his dirge.'"

And so forth till the bivouacs rang again. Vast

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camps of bell-tents had risen up behind the Modder, along the railway line, and from Cronje's eyrie on the Magersfontein kopjes they stretched back as far as the eye could see. "Aha!" said the old man, "the British will not leave the railway line."

But they were gone, these forty-eight hours and more, marching hard from many points, slipping away in silent trucks o' nights and all the while the tents still dressed their tops skywards, and fires smoked, till Piet Cronje found his flank ridden over. Vast columns were marching hard on a wide front, and Piet had to leave, cutting as it were his cables, and head for Bloemfontein, only to be brought to bay at Paardeberg Drift, on the road to St. Helena, all too because he would not abandon his wagons.

I saw him and his chief officers come into Modder River, poor Frau Cronje grasping a teapot and looking as if she sold starlights beneath the Adelphi arches, and weeping quietly on General Douglas' courteous arm, while Cronje asked gruffly for champagne. I called on the old German gunner, Commandant Albrecht of the Free State Artillery, a prisoner in his tent because he had disabled his guns after surrender and we artillerymen had a sneaking sympathy therefore. He told me, "I always tell that Cronje mind your left flank. Missus Cronje would not go on after we reached Paardeberg. She said we must outspan. Oh, there is no place for womans in war."

THE VAAL

When the Grand Army pushed on to the Bloemfontein line, Lord Methuen moved through Kimberley to Boshoff. Passing through Kimberley, we found the cold siege joints of horse still on the sideboards of the club in bravado, and I was delighted to find that the world thought more than highly of Kekewich who had commanded the town, chiefly because he

was man enough to refuse to be bossed by Cecil Rhodes. Our battery was sent through to the Vaal to keep quiet the commando which had retired through Warrenton; it had adopted a position with several guns both to hold the drift and prevent the repair of the high-level railway bridge they had blown up, which thus barred the main way to Mafeking. Our force consisted of the Munster Fusiliers and at first also the K.O.Y.L.I., with my battery, a couple of guns of the Diamond Fields Artillery, and a few mounted scouts. I was appointed Staff Officer to the force, first commanded by St. Leger Barter, and then Commandant also on the Vaal itself, where we held the town of Warrenton and had the brethren in the walled gardens the other side. My own place of vantage was a house with a tower, on the sand-bagged roof of which a whisky trap from Kimberley kept watch with a Maxim and let off whenever the brother across the way got tiresome. I messed at a little hotel inn kept by a well-known character, the wife of Jemmy Dundas, and as all her Dutch neighbours' sons were with the commando, they sniped her unmercifully as she went from the kitchen across her yard. She came to me with her hands in supplication: "Oh, Captain, do put that lyddite on them." And it was arranged from the main camp to some two miles off to lay a line on the kopje opposite from whence the young devils fired. The old dear would dance with delight when the five-inch shell came whooping overhead to crash among her little friends.

In the meantime the Boer guns across the way were becoming a nuisance, and had to be stopped, as they were disturbing the countryside which had been much harried by Cronje himself, who had ridden in and annexed the place and district to the Transvaal, and forbidden the use of the English tongue—"Nothing but the Taal." The British field cornet had withdrawn

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to Kimberley with most of the British folk. British rule had returned, but the Dutch in the area were restless with many of their young men on commando.

It was decided that we must try and get at the disturbing Krupp guns concealed in the scrub near Fourteen Streams railway station. To get at them, however, it was necessary to come right forward down an absolutely open glacis which sloped gently on our side towards the Vaal, on the banks of which the Boers were heavily entrenched. Our range was a good deal less than the Krupp guns, and so to reach them we should be obliged to come well forward. It was my business to draft the plans, which included bringing the howitzers and a couple of fifteen-pounders of Butcher's battery down by night, and entrenching them well within rifle range of the enemy's trenches on the Vaal. There was an old police redoubt which, if repaired, would hold two howitzers, and the remainder we would entrench near by. We brought the guns down by night with an escort of the Munsters. But, though by dawn we were under cover, we had no time to camouflage our new raw-red earthwork which stood out as clear as could be in the morning light. We had to range on some enemy bell-tents near which we knew the enemy's guns to be. And into those we let off a couple of ranging rounds. Immediately the Boers lowered their tents and their guns all opened most promptly on my newly-earthed police work, accompanied by a heavy rifle fire from the now scared Boers. The second round gave the enemy the range of the work in which I was with two howitzers, and every hostile gun concentrated on it with damnable accuracy. Fortunately we had good cover reveted with sleepers, and under this intense fire tried to search for the enemy guns which we could not see.

Then my own turn came and for all practical purposes I was killed. I was leaning on the parapet looking

through a telescope and correcting the elevation, when a shell struck the sand-bag in front of me. The telescope was smashed and I collapsed apparently dead, to the great delight of the men, who would now have something to talk about—the Captain dead! They pulled me under the howitzer's muzzle out of the way, and went on. Slowly I came to with the foul smell of cordite in my nostrils and the jar of the discharges in my head. I was only concussed, and automatically tried to go on with an order altering the range that was on my lips when the shell fell. But I was pretty rotten for some days with what we should now call shell-shock, and am deaf to this day therefrom.

After living for an hour in this concentrated whirl of falling shell, the enemy's fire died down, and a limber blew up. As we steadily ranged on the flashes, gun after gun had been located and silenced. Earlier in the morning Arthur Paget had come out in an armoured train from Kimberley and had watched our isolated guns disappear in the falling shells from the Krupps. He said to Colonel Evans, who had succeeded Barter in command, "Well, you've made a mess of it! Wire me your casualties in the evening!" and departed.

However, when our report of complete success reached him later, he was good enough to send us his hearty appreciation. The whole country now settled down and the land had peace for several days.

Shortly after, Archie Hunter came up to force the passage of the Vaal at Berkeley West, by the river diggings, and loose Mahon for his ride to Mafeking. Hunter then swept up the Vaal to us, and I took General Arthur Paget an adventurous ride, as it proved, with a couple of scouts to commune in his camp with Hunter, with whom was Archibald Murray, his chief Staff Officer. Our Boers were still at Fourteen Streams,

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though they had fallen back from the actual banks of the Vaal.

Our ride of five or six miles went off all right, but coming back we fell among the brethren, and had to gallop for our lives, A.P. a-cussing something 'orrible. It was rocky country, and the gauntlet that we ran, apparently of a line of piquets, for a couple of miles with the bullets cracking on the rocks and the curious double report of the Mauser echoing around, was exciting enough. But A.P. surpassed himself when our own piquets took us on too, and on arriving at the pont we found that a company ordered to the further side two hours earlier was only now crossing. These are occasions when the gift of tongue is worth having, and Emperor Arthur had it. Those who remember him do so with great affection, and to me his ways were a delight. His simple and lordly orders for the attack used to appeal to me, "Sprinkle a little lyddite and then my Munsters," as he waved his cigar. Again so long as folk gossip in clubs, for they have left their messes, will the story of the first-class carriage and his comfortable seat remain coupled with that other hero of fable, P.B.T., "Poor B——y Tucker."

DE WET HUNTS

In the fall of the year 1900 the acquiescence of the wiser burghers in the conquest of the Free State and Transvaal was disturbed by the decision of De Wet and some of the wilder leaders to try and throw the British from their saddle by a guerilla war. A guerilla war that is successful is well enough, a guerilla war that fails brings misery untold on those who inaugurate it. To the British, the South African War was a row in their own nursery, and was not to be fought *à l'outrance*, and therefore none of the cruelties or austerities that have characterized the guerilla and servile wars of the past were in evidence. The fact

that even the recognized belligerent commandos were no uniform loaded the dice greatly against us, and when many of those who had surrendered to us and gone to their homes, slipped out to the guerilla commandos, it was almost impossible to differentiate between those who were evil and those who were not, the which was also evident in Ireland in the recent "bad time." At first great solemn columns attempted to move through the country, the sort of column Mr. Ulysses P. Ziegler tells of in the Kipling story, before the young cavalry and mounted-infantry leaders were turned loose, with their mounted men and irregular corps. For some months I perambulated the veld with "Settles' Circus" and "Parsons' Pantomime," the columns of two of the older generals of the day, with a couple of howitzers and generally commanding any other guns attached, fighting often enough but without anything decisive, and often losing our own tail feathers. I had got my five-inch howitzers as mobile horse artillery, with their shell in Scotch carts and the limbers empty. We were always well forward, and the moment the Boers held the force up, our mounted troops would gallop them down so long as a lyddite shell over their heads would crash on the kopjes they were galloping at. The yellow fumes of lyddite that had not detonated properly, and had therefore not given a deadly explosion, always gave the troops the greater satisfaction! By the end of 1900 De Wet had become a terrible thorn and we all took our turn at De Wet hunts, up and down the Free State and then right down into the old Colony, Hanover Road, Richmond, the Karoo and the Rocky veld, then down by Prince Albert and Ootshorn over the Swartzberg to the coast. The rail was in our favour, and Lord Kitchener pelted his columns down to collar the commandos low, Schuipers, "That Mr. Kritzinger," George Kemp and many another. It

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was in the old Colony that we found the real old-world Dutch folk, who did not know they had been British subjects a hundred years and more. We had some handsome scraps with some of the commandos, but the pace was too much for them. They had failed to raise the Colony in their favour, though many stray lads had joined them, and in three months had fled back.

There was one occasion I always look back on with marvel. An elderly General commanded a group of mounted columns, with which Harold Grenfell and myself were the only Imperial officers. We believed that to gallop straight at the brethren whenever we saw them was the right tactics, and we found that our General would never close, and whenever we were getting to close grips called us off. Just as we had really, after three days' hard riding, got Kritzinger by the short hairs in the Swartzberg, our General announced his intention of sitting down and waiting for a convoy. This was the last straw. Grenfell came to me, "We must stop this. This old man's feet are ice. You must come with me and we will mutiny." We went. Grenfell said, "If you discontinue the pursuit, I will march my column to the rail and MacMunn will take all the guns and we will wire to Lord Kitchener and say what we have done and why."

It was the first and last mutiny I have had a hand in. I expected to be put in chains, but we won and we galloped Kritzinger through Willowmore and Graaf Reinet, pulling out his tail feathers by the handful. La, la! Oates of the Royals, "That very gallant gentleman," was with us and much distinguished himself.

Those days of the De Wet hunts, when at a moment's notice you were flung into long trains of coal trucks and went off hundreds of miles into the blue of the

night to act as stop or full cry as the case might be, were exciting, dirty guerilla days.

SCALLYWAGGING

Then I found myself scallywagging, being appointed to command the artillery, six assorted guns, of the irregular corps, a thousand strong, known as the Commander-in-Chief's Body-Guard, and took to a felt hat, and a red feather in it. I went off to Natal to join them and found them driving along the Zulu border, where Lord Kitchener had planned to force Louis Botha into the hands of a Zulu Impi or to surrender. I went by Schuipers Neck and the Roorke's Drift of the old war. Father Bethune had told me of Goughie's trouble on the neck, and how he himself had smacked a man's face for firing the wrong way and found it was a Boer !

It was a good scallyway corps commanded by an old friend of the Indian Frontier, Kellow Chesney of the 18th Bengal Lancers, a prince of irregulars, with dear "Long" Nairne of the Royal Artillery as his adjutant. My artillery officers included the mate of a windjammer from the Mexican coast, and a regular sergeant of horse artillery with the irregular complex. Every sort of runaway steward and stoker were in our ranks and a few English Africanders from the old Colony, the best of the lot. With the force also were the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles under the well-known "Bimbash" Stewart, and their reputation was for looting more than fighting, no doubt incorrectly. The Bimbash was a character, and among many yarns of him I remember, that the General had sent his provost-marshal, who was believed to be of Jewish race, to complain of his men's looting. The officer spoke with a little lisp : " The General understands your men have been looting, Colonel." The Bimbash looked at him, pulled out his watch, and said, " Say,

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mister ! D'ye vant to buy a vatch ? " The P.M. retired discomfited.

It cannot be said that the scallywags as a whole were good soldiers, and they were nearly as bad as horse-masters as the new Yeomanry. The war had now become one of mounted troops, with the infantry guarding the railways and the depots. The original colonial troops, few but good, had been expended. Tens of thousands of mounted troops were being raised, and tens of thousands of remounts were being purchased the world round. The original Yeomanry had seen horses, the new Yeomanry had rarely seen a horse. Now the Army was full of officers who could train men and condition horses, but Lord Kitchener, who was always supremely ignorant of how armies are made in their detail, thought those who tried to tell him were making difficulties, would never give the new corps and the new horses time to train or recover from their voyages. Thousands of horses were thrown away by this frame of mind. Runaway stewards and shop boys on raw Argentines were not the stuff to take on the better commandos and many sharp reverses were experienced.

I remember one old Boer and his sons who came in and surrendered their rifles, which were British rifles. " Oh ! " he said, " we are so thankful to be here, in peace ! " So we said to him, " You silly old cup of tea, why did you not surrender sooner ? " " Your proclamation said that you would only accept Boers as surrenders if they handed in a rifle each, so we have had to hang about until we could ' catch a Yeomanry. ' "

It took a long time to get the troops fit under these conditions and Lord Kitchener had the complex that every commander who wanted time to refit or rest his horses was a loafer. This attitude generally towards the new troops, to my mind, kept the war on many unnecessary months, only to be justified by flat-catching

a Government clamouring for too early a victory or contemplating surrender, or by the necessity to try and fluke a victory to avoid foreign interference or Irish rebellion. But Lord Kitchener was *sui generis*, and above all things he loved a "knight's move."

Some of his leaders were poor enough stuff, it is true, and here is a story that is typical of our Chief of that day. A certain General, and a cavalry one at that, who had had a large mounted column in the field and had been singularly ineffective, wired to Lord Kitchener: "Louis Botha and 3,000 Boers are advancing against me from the north." To which his lordship replied, knowing his man and hoping perhaps to get some spark of energy, replied, "Which way are you retiring?"

CLEARING THE COUNTRY

A war that lasted close on three years must go through many phases, and we were now in the middle of 1901, to change from that of pursuing columns sweeping up and down the land, to one of the columns based on areas which they should know by heart and in which their operations should commence by clearing the country. It was obvious that the British fighting a family war could not leave the women and children to starve, but to clear the country of fighting men it would be necessary to stop every farm from being a cook-house and a store depot. The flocks of sheep and cattle must be captured or destroyed, the supplies of grain used up or burnt, but to destroy the food-stuffs, the families must be brought in to concentration camps. The Boers had brought it on themselves by going back to war when their Governments had been captured and their commandos beaten. My scally-wagging was soon to come to an end, and I was ordered to join Colonel Hugh Williams, "Uganda" Williams, or "The Buckmaster," as he was called, of my own

regiment, who was one of a group of three Williams brothers who were commanding columns. My man commanded a group in the Southern Free State, based on Springfontein, for many months and took huge convoys of wagons to bring away the families while we night-marched to get near the commandos in the interval. Many a run have we given Rechter Hertzog, and his brothers Munich and Willie.

The night raiding had a touch of the covenanting days. A commando or a patrol or a leader were reported as sleeping in a certain farm. We would march all night to surround the place before dawn. The Dutch rise early and sing the Psalms of David in simple point, before they emerge. As we surrounded the house and placed our men we would perhaps hear clear young girls' voices singing :

*"Hij door mijnhand ap Zions troon veheven
Heerscht op den berg van mijn Heiligheid."*¹

Waiting till they had finished, the troops would hammer on the door. "Hands up, all here!" A silence, then screams, "*Allemachtig, die Khaki is op die stoep!*"—"The Khakis are at the door!" Another loud rap with a rifle butt, an officer with a revolver, and while the troops under cover were watchful lest a volley be fired from the gloom within, out would file perhaps a dozen young men sheepishly handing over their arms, and the girls reviling us. As the country-side got emptier it paid to leave a few honeypots in the shape of two or three families in a farm with a good supply of food and coffee, and then go and live 25 miles away and raid the place every ten days.

One of the best of our dodges, and it is to be remembered that any game started by an enemy will be played better by the British in due course, slimness, camouflage, propaganda, and the like, was this. We had with us

¹ "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

a Scots doctor with red hair who had been in practice in the country for some years and could talk the Taal, which men now call Afrikaans. We made him grow his beard, and in Boer clothes he would be led to a farm on a horse, handcuffed by a thong to a couple of mounted men. He would be released, shoved inside and a guard put on the door. Inside he would be regaled with coffee and gossip. Outside the column would outspan for an hour. When it was time to go the prisoner would be hauled forth and tied up again with some roughness and be led away, but bursting with all the news of the local commando and its ways. Paul Kenna, one of our column commanders in the days when the Boers had grown too cautious to sleep at a farm, would surround it at night with a small party, shut up the women in one room, hide the men inside, put the officer and a couple of sentries into *capjies* and skirts, and carry on the housework in the verandah o' mornings. It would not be long before some Dutch patrol would scamper down for coffee and a cuddle to be met with a row of rifle barrels as they mounted the step. There was amusement and some pathos at the anger of the imprisoned women when they understood what was going on—but "*A la guerre comme à la guerre.*"

Ere long poor Williams was done-in by a flash of lightning and had to leave us.

When the clearing was done, came the last and most effective of all stages, the blockhouse line and the driving, which was a great relief after months of night marching, and after driving thousands of captured sheep at a snail's pace with a hungry commando hanging on your heels and a *spruit* to cross.

DRIVE AND BLOCKHOUSE

We divided the whole country up into areas of which the sides were usually railways or river heavily block-

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housed, and the transverse were long lines of block-housed wire fences—a blockhouse, according to ground, half to a quarter mile apart with six to ten men. A company headquarters with small reserve every couple of miles (those were the days of small companies), a battalion headquarters every five miles or so. Convoys and individuals could move by day unguarded along these cross-country lines. The area in each enclosure might be a hundred by a hundred miles, it was often more. It was found that only very daring commandos could get through, and that all such movements were fully traced. The blockhouses were of corrugated iron, made in the railway workshops, with an outer and inner sheet, space between earth and stones, pent roof of iron, so that bombs would roll off, interior sunk a couple of feet, loopholes under the eaves. The blockhouse system could not be successful till the Boer guns had been all captured by the movable column, as a gun would reduce them at once. The wire between the fences was daily strengthened and tell-tale devices evolved that would give the alarm at an attempt to cut, when the blockhouses would fire down the fence. Within the areas the drives like a game drive took place. The columns would march out to some rendezvous, form line in some unexpected direction and then drive down between the side lines to the doubly held piece at the end. The brethren, even when they tumbled to what a drive meant, did not know till the actual line had been formed which direction it was coming, diagonally, longways, or crossways. Having driven from the centre to the end, the columns would turn about, rush back over the driven piece and then form line again and drive the untouched piece of cover. The possible permutations were many. The secret of success was to get on to your night line early and form a continuous rifle line with saddles as cover, for the whole distance, making

sure that there were no gaps in each column front and no gaps between columns.

The brethren, when they found what was up, would drive herds of mares along the line, drawing fire in the hope of finding a silent patch. At times the braver spirits have broken through a line, driving loose cattle and horse before them, but that was a terrifying experience. It was soon found that a line well formed and with no gaps, held the commandos till the mop-up at the end. Even when some of a commando got through, they lost their stock, resting horses, and any carts and wagons remaining to them. I have stood on a kopje in the middle of a driving line at night and seen a burst of fire coming along the line as a false or true alarm started, and in the distance the armoured trains and searchlight playing on some attempt to get through on the rail. The experienced commanders and staff put every pistol and rifle in the line at night, using their wagons as obstacles. The camps had no body at all, just a line that slept in position, rifle in hand. False alarms did more good than harm, for they kept the line alert, and frightened any brethren who might be "tapping" the line in search of a gap.

There was no doubt that it was the organized drive that brought the war to a close when all other methods had failed. But the good Lord Kitchener would not leave the men on the spot to finish any job, so much had the complex of distrust arisen within him. The end of the drive is always full of stuff, yet he would, time and again, call off the columns a few miles from the end, in his hurry to get the next drive going.

It was now my lot to leave our own group of columns which had been driving successfully in the Free State and be sent over as Chief Staff Officer to Alec Rochfort's ¹ group, with a view to my helping organize

¹ Colonel A. Rochfort, R.A.

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drives which were now to be introduced to that part of the country. After some period of raiding by our columns, which included such opposites as the scally-wag corps of Driscoll's Scouts and the Royal Dragoons still dressed as soldiers, both efficient at different poles, we started on the last great drive of the war.

I carried special instruction to Rochfort both for his drives and *re* certain peace negotiations and areas which were to be let free from raids while selected leaders cogitated. And I had orders to "commandeer any horses you require from any officer or trooper of any corps," so long as I got through without delay. Armed with this I rode and drove a hundred miles a day. Cars were unknown, and it is worth while to pause and reflect that in these days the Boer War could not have lasted three years. Wireless, cars and lorries, let alone planes, would have weighted the dice terribly on our side.

It is to be remembered and realized that the British-born soldier loses efficiency if he is allowed to scally-wag. Those regiments that discarded helmets and let their men wear felt hats and feathers—which the men loved to do—lost fighting efficiency and reliability. Batteries who did the same and left their haversacks and water-bottles on the gun barrels equally deteriorated. Atkins from city and suburban life does best with the trained ways and coils of restraint. The Royals were always dashing and efficient, as were the Guards; for the same reason, others were far less so. The ways of the various parts of the Empire and the soldiering that suits them must be *sui generis*.

Our own commander was a man of wisdom and resource, and I always remember with delight his trying a new Scottish militia battalion who were to hold our base on the Vaal. He wanted them tested, and he sent out our chief scout and a party of a dozen scouts and Kaffirs to attack their camp. To see that

I ran it properly he sent me down to be shot at too. All went well, the corps was quite quick and steady and Rochfort saw he could leave them without anxiety.

The end of the war came very suddenly when we were all braced and geared for a fourth year of it, which is the spirit that wins war. Guerilladom we now understood, and the Boer leaders were well advised to chuck when they did, and would have been still wiser to have accepted the first decision. Rochfort was appointed Commissioner for surrenders in the Western Transvaal, and I went as his Staff Officer, somewhat bored thereat, but it was an interesting experience.

One saw that only success succeeds. Such Boer women as were left were very bitter with the surrendering Boer Generals, and I saw and heard the latter cruelly reviled—not for giving in, but for having kept the war going two years, torn the country to ribbons, only to fail at last. It was only too true. The country was in tatters. Hardly a farm had a door, a window, a fence, or a gate-post. There was no fuel on the veld. The harassed British columns revisiting farms, year in, year out, first burnt the sheep-dung fuel, then the fences, and finally doors and window-frames. As the mounted-infantry sergeant said, “Hi likes to cook with the ’armonium.” It was dry wood.

One more scene is always vivid in my memory. As Rochfort and I rode into Sweitze Renike in the Western Transvaal to receive the submission and the arms of the surrendering commandos, we saw, to our surprise, two of our fifteen-pounder guns drawn up in front of the Kirk. At my side ran a little Dutchman who kept patting my leg and saying, “The British did not think the Boers had any guns left, eh ? ”

We had brought some rum with us to wet the surrenders, and night closed happily enough in the centre square of the dorp. I heard one old burgher

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who would not go to bed say to his friends who were persuading him, "Le' me be, I'm Bri'ish subjec'."

Riding home from the surrenders we encountered an unusual snow-storm, and that was my last memory of three years on the veld. I cannot recall a single incident of our way to the sea. All one knew was that, "Be the day short or be the day long, at length it ringeth to evensong."

THE STAFF COLLEGE

Just before the war I had been up for the Staff College and had been one gunner place out. In 1900 I received a nomination and was ordered Home by the War Office, but Lord Kitchener said, "No, stop till the finish of the war," which I was glad enough to do; but in 1901 came the same order from Home, and the same result in South Africa. It was not till 1902, when all was over, that I finally was ordered to join the College, which I did in 1903, when I was transferred to the Senior Division with Arthur Money and one or two others who had been given a "Q.S." ¹ in the Honours Gazette at the end of the war, and we thus graduated with one year's work, which enabled us to get into the stride of our higher careers without undue delay. The year at the College was a happy time, all the more so that most of us had seen more of the war than our instructors and did not take them too seriously. The dear good Miles was Commandant, quite the cleverest though by no means the most suitable of those who have held that office. "Small-hat" was a source of joy to all who saw his humour and realized that he was oftener pulling your leg than you his, as some of us imagined they were doing. I called on him once when Home from India on leave. "What are you doing?" he asked. "I am on the General Staff on the Frontier," I said. "Oh!" said

¹ = Qualified for Staff Duty.

he ; " the General Staff, that's dangerous, don't stay there ! One mistake and you're done. Keep to the Administrative Staff and make as many as you like. Look at me." He was then Quartermaster-General to the Forces. Some years later I met him when he was Governor of Gibraltar and I was Quartermaster-General in India. " Oh ! tell me, MacMunn, I've always wanted to know. The Army in India, is it like our Army ? Does it do the same things—quarrels with the Treasury, eats food, laughs quietly when the General Staff are in the clouds, ah-h-h ? " Those who knew Small-hat will well imagine him saying it. Quite what answer he wanted me to give I don't know. He knew most things, was quite ineffective, and in politics might have tipped Lloyd George from his throne. Another of his sayings was, " Oh ! never give a decision ! Oh ! no."

The College year with the drag, my good horse Donovan that won the heavy-weight point-to-point, and all the joy of living with so many keen and coming soldiers, many, alas, now on the other side, soon passed, and once more I found myself *en route* for the Shiny. I was unexpectedly promoted while *en route* and posted to command the 80th Field Battery at that queen of stations, Saugor, taking out a draft of 200 kilted barbarians from a Highland regiment at Dublin. The 80th had been long commanded by one of the best gunners of his time, Major Jellet, and his battery was all that a good battery should be. But the happy life of a battery is not for those who have harnessed themselves to the Staff College and the car of ambition. Just as I was getting into my stride, for I had not seen a field battery for twelve years, I was offered two Staff jobs and chose that of what was then called in the Kitchener jargon " Art of War " or " Bloodshed " as distinct from " Administration," which the Army called " Inkshed," in the Derajat

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Military District, which in those days included both Bannu and the Derajat.

THE FRONTIER AGAIN

I was now to have my fourth tour of Frontier service, using the term to denote the Afghan border and the Frontier hills, though the active service on the North-East Frontier of Burma and China was just as much Frontier service as that on the North-West.

The Curzon policy was now in full swing, as the result of that statesman's attempt to introduce a logical plan of development on that Frontier. The great upheavals of 1907/8 had left us with a large amount of costly regular garrisons across the administrative border, in the Khaiber, Kurram, Samana, and in the Waziristan Valleys. The Indian soldier hates transfrontier garrisons. He can't get or afford to take short leave, he cannot visit his *placens uxor*, nor can he have his family with him. Only batta and rations compensate him for the unpleasantness of the service.

Lord Curzon was horrified at the situation. Troops needed for *Grande Guerre* locked up in petty garrisons was not business, and he set about a better military and Frontier policy. A locally enlisted militia, raised from those very tribes who made the trade routes insecure, were to be raised in the not inaccurate premise that want of occupation and livelihood made caterans more than anything else. It was believed that as long as the local folk generally were peacefully inclined, and not hankering for the war-path, the chiefs and elders preferred trade and prosperity rather than rapine and punitive expeditions, and that so long as they were in this mood he would have their support. This point is well worth understanding, because as the years rolled on we began to look on the militias as a part of our own forces and were annoyed that they



FRONTIER MILITIA ON THE AFGHAN BORDER

failed us in 1919, when Amanullah launched his Afghan army on India. The tribes, excited by all the Islamic propaganda during the war and much stirred by the Afghan inroads, turned against us, and the militia they furnished turned too, but Lord Curzon's policy never contemplated anything else.

The militias were duly raised and commanded by some of the best of our Frontier officers, and on the long curtain of the Indus and the Suleiman mountains they were backed by three Frontier brigades of all arms at Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. It was to the war staff of the latter ¹ that I was posted, and our special business was to know our bit of the border inside-out, and to support the defence of the Gomal trade route, by the Southern Waziristan Militia who had their headquarters at Wana far up in the Waziri Hills.

For three years I soldiered in that rather damnable part of the Frontier, hoping for a Frontier war which never came off, though there has been plenty of it before and since. Chiefly, however, was the period remarkable by the unreliable conduct of the Waziris, and especially the Mahsud branch of the race and most particularly of a section known as the Shabi Khel. The Mahsud is notorious all over the border for his unreliability and faithlessness, being utterly *be-ittebar*. Nevertheless he is an extremely attractive scoundrel, appealing greatly in his jaunty swagger and love of sport to those British officers who are attracted by Pathans. There are many who are, but there are also many officers who dislike him and all his ways cordially. The Mahsuds are especially alert and attractive under arms, and in the World War, away from their own little dunghill and that uncertain gallery to which they loved to play, proved staunch and gallant soldiers.

¹ Separated from Bannu before long.

In the militias they were a failure and quite unreliable, though their brethren, the Darwesh Khel Wazirs, were fairly trustworthy. We first came seriously into touch with them during the fixing of the Durand line, the demarcated border between the British sphere of influence and Afghanistan, in 1904. The force escorting the mission, a brigade commanded by Brigadier-General Turner, was surprised by the tribesmen, and a desperate fight at dawn ensued. The perimeter camp that faced all ways, and the edge of which every rifle could man, had not yet been elaborated, and the force merely lay under piquets. A punitive expedition followed and a British force stayed for a while at Wana, high up in the Waziri Hills, to be replaced at last by the Southern Waziristan Militia. Then, about the time that I came to that part of the Frontier, the Shabi Khel began to show off. A sentry of that clan posted over the officers' quarters in the fort of Sarwekai, had the happy thought that the glory of his Khel for treachery and faithlessness would be much enhanced if he shot the Political Officer, Major Bowring, entrusted to his care. Whereupon he did so, and then betook himself with all his ammunition to the keep and proceeded to fire on all and sundry. To quote my Indian friend, "Here as poet Shakespeare says was pretty kettle of fish." The militiamen were very excited, but wrath that their clansman should snipe in fury at them too, and marksman and bullets began to rap round the loopholes of the keep. But to shoot him might involve the shooter in a blood feud, and finally after much palaver it was decided that a relative should do the deed when it could be written off the tribal books as an accident.

The murderer's vanity had oozed from his fingertips and he now saw before him a snarling dog's death in the keep, or a swing in pig-skin in a British jail. Abuse now changed to parley and at last he stood up

to be shot at, stipulating what was heedlessly granted, that his friends should have his body. Hereafter his grave became a place of pilgrimage for all his tribe—lit o' Fridays with flickering of oil *chirags*.

The Shabi Khel had now tasted pride of place. The next attempt was on the golf links at Bannu, when a woodcutter fell on an officer with his axe, without fatal results. But a little later, Major Donaldson of my own Corps was shot riding at the head of a new battalion marching into Bannu in relief. His murderer, also a lad, of the Shabi Khel, had hid under a culvert. Donaldson died and the murderer gained the pig-skin in the sad game of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But the race was still to run. Lieut.-Colonel Harman, one of the most distinguished of Frontier soldiers, was posted to the command of the Southern Waziristan Militia. To him Pathans were a joy, cognizant though he was of all the evil that lurks in their bones. Under his infectious leading the battalion came to great efficiency, and Simla rubbed its hands together. But they had reckoned without their Shabi Khel—shabby Khel the army called them. One day when the Mahsud companies were garrisoning the keep, with all the reserves of food and ammunition, a Mahsud militiaman of that ill-omened crew appeared in the mess-room while the officers were dining and shot the Colonel across the mess table. There was a scurry outside as of watchers. The murderer was secured, but the Colonel was dead. Under the Frontier Crimes Act trial was swift, but the first dramatic act was to get the Mahsuds out of the keep, as their share in the outrage was uncertain. After much parley and a triumph of psychological influence the Mahsuds came out, laid down their arms and were camped outside. The other components, furious at their Colonel's death, remained staunch.

The next thing was to execute the murderer duly

sentenced by the Frontier magistrate, who was also the political officer. Who should hang him, for hang he must, and that promptly, in those hills a hundred miles away from help ! No other clansmen could be expected to do it, and to use the scavengers might try Moslem staunchness too high. It fell to His Majesty's Royal Engineers in the shape of a subaltern, and in the course of his meet and proper duty to do so, assisted by the other officers, using a beam over an angle in the keep as gallows, just after sunset. The burial was no easy matter either, since the glory of the shrine of remembrance must not be repeated. The officers and scavengers buried the wretch at dead of night under the smouldering heaps of mule litter outside the keep, and to this day no man knows the site.

But the Mahsud since those days has not served in the local militia.

THE DERAJAT

It was more than interesting to sojourn on these frontiers of the Derajat, "The country of the people who live in tents," among the ruins of the Græco-Bactrian frontier posts and the scenes whence since time was the invading hordes have pressed from Ghuzni on the road to the Dhankot Ferry and the road to Delhi. It is a land where many invading races have left pockets of folk who have long served the British in the Mooltani Horse, Gandapurs, Babers, Chaudwans and the like. The Ghilzais from whom they sprang still come down the Gomal and the parallel passes in the autumn by the tens of thousands to escape the snow on the Ghuzni uplands, and to trade and tyrannize over village folk in India. There, old folks and children and camels camp all over the Derajat and the Indus Kachchi, the small boys shouting "*paisa wachawa*"—"throw us a copper, guv'nor"

—and turning cart-wheels as you ride past their encampments, and rosy-faced and incredibly grimy girls grin at you. In the spring they would assemble at the mouth of the Gomal and thence march home, sept by sept and clan by clan to tuck of drum, fighting their own passage through Mahsud-land.

And now and again some stout Australian lass from the gold-fields would come back married to a Ghilzai who had taken his camels so far afield, she perhaps to rule the roost in Ghilzai-land.

It was all fascinating and dramatic, if you could get your nose off the hockey and polo ground. And because I spent much time among the outposts I met and got to know many varieties of Indian soldiery to add to my earlier experience. The Indian officers of the 20th Punjabis and the Cokes Rifles alone were an education, and one spent one's time often droning Punjabi or picking up Pushtoo. There is an amusing yarn of Fasken, who had been commanding the force at Bannu. A Sikh recruit orderly sat on a bench outside the General's study. Fasken was in the garden, and Mrs. Fasken came to the door and called him. He did not hear, and the boy ran out to him calling in the broadest Punjabi, "*Awjee ! teri gharwali tusi bolaundi !*"¹—the simple language of the peasantry, and many of us miss its long drawling "*aunda*" and "*ja-ala*," and I learnt the merry story of what happened to the lady who went to dusty Lala Musa.

My Generals were all knockabout Frontier soldiers, Pearson² of the Bombay Army; Adams³ of the Guides, who won the V.C. at Chakdara in the Chitral Relief Expedition; Paddy Anderson⁴ of my own regiment. And we rode the Frontier continually, and once the

¹ "Oh, Sir, thy house-mate calls thee !"

² General Sir Alfred Pearson.

³ Major-General Sir Robert Adams.

⁴ Lieut.-General Sir Charles Anderson.

good Lord Kitchener himself, with Birdwood, came through, and I took him up the Chuhr Khel Dhana on the way to Zhob and Quetta. The Border Military Police had petitioned to be allowed to mount his personal guard at the Frontier outpost of Draban. Then to show what a lad he was, the sentry chose to desert with his rifle and leave his Lordship unprotected. With my experience of the Shabi Khel I spent a night and morning in twittering anxiety.

Now and again we could hear reports of black partridge or wild fowl being more than usually tiresome, and we had to explore that too. And on one occasion we slipped away to uninhabited portions of the Indus to explore the mysterious *Kafir Kots*, the Castles of the Unbelievers, the strongholds of Rajah Bil and Rajah Til, that of the latter commanding the passage of the Tangdara defile whence the Kurram River reaches the Indus, and whence too he commanded the deep channel of the great river. The Temples therein seem to date with those of Kashmir, and the Hindu Kingdoms destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni. But no legend remains save that the garrison was betrayed to the invaders from Afghanistan by a dancing girl, a khanjhari, who dwelt in a temple hard by.

And thus among soldiers and tribesmen the years slipped away.

CHAPTER IV

SIMLA, UNDER LORD KITCHENER

I HAD finished some three years of my first tenure of Staff employment, when I was offered an appointment in Simla in what was then called the Division of the Chief of the Staff. When Lord Kitchener and Sir Beauchamp Duff were carrying out the Scheme of Reorganization the British Government had not made up its mind to create a General Staff. Looking back on the controversy, the reluctance of the Government to the step now seems inconceivable. The Hartington Commission had recommended it years before, but Mr. Gladstone had declared that such a thing would mean preparation for war, and preparation for war meant inducement of war, and so for years it hung in abeyance. The Quartermaster-General's Department did the Intelligence work, and the drawing up of such strategical plans as there were, but the Adjutant-General was responsible for training, and clear thinking was conspicuously absent from the conduct of the preparation for war. While the subject was again being hotly discussed at Home, Lord Kitchener divided the Staff into "Art of War" and "Administration."

At Headquarters in India, a Chief of the Staff was created, who should not only be head of the "Art of War" Branch, but Chief of the Staff over the other principal Staff officers, the which is an abomination to the British school of thought. As, however, the Chief of the Staff was to be paid 2,000 rupees a month more than the Adjutant-General or Quartermaster-

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General, the position was quite definite. I now found myself a D.A.Q.M.G. in the Division of the Chief of Staff, which we should now call a G.S.O.2, posted to what we should now called the Directorate of Military Training. No such concise name was then used, for the Division of the Chief of Staff was divided into two branches, that presided over by "The Officer in Charge of Military Operations," and the "Officer in Charge of Military Training and Staff Duties." The former was Colonel Mullaly, Lord Kitchener's principal agent in carrying out his plans, and the latter Colonel Jack Cowans.

THE INDIAN STAFF COLLEGE

The Indian Staff College had just been formed temporarily at Deolali in the Deccan, but the permanent college was in course of building at Quetta. Some comment had come from the War Office when Lord Kitchener had proposed a Staff College in India. He was told very forcibly that India was full of officers of the British Service who had graduated at Camberley while many Indian Army Officers had done the same, and yet practically none of them were employed on the Staff, and that the only justification for so expensive a luxury as the Staff College was that "you had need for Staff College Graduates on the Staff." This was a very pertinent remark, for it had long been a subject of bitter and contemptuous comment among the more instructed that India preferred to appoint to its Staff those who thought Frontier activity the be all and end all of soldiering, or nice-looking young men with friends at court. Further, it was a matter of common comment that the Staff in India was pretty amateur and inefficient.

Lord Kitchener had gone on with his plans, and I had been sent for from Dera Ismael Khan the year before to form one of a Board who were to work together at

carrying out the first entrance examination. Military Geography and Strategy had been my subjects. I now found that I was to hunt out all the Staff College graduates in India, and see how many were employed and put up proposals for the employment of them all, so that the effective gibe from the War Office should no more hold good. The result of the absurd system was that India was not sending her best young men to the College, and encouraging them to undertake that laborious measure of efficiency. Indeed, from this a very interesting position had arisen very closely connected with the Kitchener-Curzon controversy which had just terminated.

THE KITCHENER-CURZON CONTROVERSY

That controversy that had then just ended is worthy of understanding by the rising generation, especially since in 1928 has appeared that fascinating *Life of the Great Viceroy* from the able pen of Lord Ronaldshay. The author deals at some length with this controversy and treats fairly enough of the improper manner in which the dice were loaded against Lord Curzon, but also infers that the failures of the Indian Army organization to make good in the earlier days of the World War were due to the adoption of the opposite view to that held by Lord Curzon and Sir Edmund Elles.

It is to be remembered that Lord Kitchener had come to India with something more than a commission to command the Army in India. He had come with the experience of South Africa, when the Russo-Japanese War was still more emphasizing the effect of modern armaments, and he had come with a mission to modernize the Indian Army, and to remove more completely those defects which the Frontier troubles of 1897 had revealed, but which had only partially been remedied.

He found at the seat of Government an organization which very much resembled the state of affairs which had existed at Home before Mr. Childers had produced his reforms. That is to say, the War Ministry and Army Headquarters were divorced, as had been the case when the War Office and the Military Headquarters at the Horse Guards were separate establishments. In India the Secretary of State for War was known as the Military Member of the Governor-General's Council, while the Commander-in-Chief in India was separate, taking the orders of the Government from the Military Member. This arrangement, somewhat remodelled when India came directly under the Crown, had existed in much the same form before the Mutiny, and had incidentally considerably added to the difficulties of that crisis. Of late years it had been naturally the custom to select the most able soldier available as Commander-in-Chief, and to have nearly as prominent a soldier, usually of the Indian Army, as Military Member. That is to say, the Secretary of State for War was a soldier, a situation which the constant state of war and constant threat of trouble that prevailed justified. This officer was a General of high rank.

But in every Ministry of the Indian Government there is also a Secretary to Government who is head of the department, and not only second to none but the Member, but is also, under the constitution, the man whose duty it is to take the business of the Member to the Viceroy and who is constitutionally charged with disagreeing, if he thought it necessary, with the policy of his Member. In the Military Department was also, therefore, a very important official, the Secretary to Government in the Military Department, who also was a distinguished and selected general officer. Thus connected with the military affairs of Government were first the most prominent soldier, the

Commander-in-Chief, who was an extraordinary member of the Governor-General's Council without portfolio, and second to the Viceroy, the nearly as distinguished soldier who was War Minister, and the distinguished soldier who was Secretary to Government in the Army Department. Not only was this the case, but all the officials of the Department were also soldiers.

Now the real sting of the situation lies in the following anomaly. India, for peculiar reasons of its own, had refused to take her Staff questions seriously, the which was a scandal, as already referred to.

But the Military Department, on the contrary, did make a point of employing Indian Army graduates, with the result that the officers of what should have been a bureau concerned with the governmental side of Army affairs, was equipped with far better trained Staff officers than Army Headquarters itself. From this was engendered a habit of criticism and technical interference with the inferior schemes that at times emanated from Army Headquarters. In fact, it was said with some truth that the Military Department had all the continuity and experience that was required to develop into a General Staff, a body at that time existing neither in India nor at Imperial Headquarters.

The Army at Home was in the throes of reformation after South Africa, but the universal General Staff had not come into being, nor had the Field Service Regulations, with a nomenclature and a system of war, yet seen the light, with the result that there was no common system nor even a common language existing for modern organization on which the reformers throughout the world could set to work.

Now Lord Curzon, with some considerable knowledge of the East and of India, knew that affairs in that country, good though they were, still lagged far behind the great modern movements of the world. Every

branch of life in India needed stirring and modernizing, but to stir a machine in a country of 300 millions was a Herculean task, and Herculean he found it. He knew that Army affairs also needed the same stimulant, and that the possibility of a "Greycoat Guard at the Helmund Ford," could not be disregarded. Lord Kitchener was a man after his own heart, and he welcomed his coming. Lord Kitchener then set himself down, or rather set two officers of his Headquarters, Colonel Mullaly, who knew the conditions of the Army, and Major Malleeson, whom he found buried in the Ordnance Department, to study the whole Central Asia problem, and on their data he was able to build and set before Government some estimate of the military situation of India, and on the conditions under which the Army in India must maintain itself before the Empire resources could be expected to come to her aid.

He soon found himself involved in a keen discussion as to the accuracy of many of his views with the very able Military Member of Council, Lieut.-General Sir Edmund Elles, late of the Royal Artillery, and his clever Staff. Some of Lord Kitchener's proposals were not easy to accept, and Lord Kitchener soon realized that his tenure of appointment would not nearly suffice to get his work done, so long as the present system lasted. Lord Curzon also had found the Secretariat system of the Government of India a drag on all prompt administration, while the system of permanent India clerks, who wrote long and often blocking minutes on the past for their superiors to sign, made decision and action almost impossible to attain. On one occasion he wrote his well-known remark; "Fifteen minutes and nothing done, I am in despair!" In lighter vein I also remember a minute of his own which ran: "I agree with the gentleman whose signature is like a trombone."

Lord Kitchener's and Lord Curzon's sympathies were by no means apart in their ideals of action, but Lord Kitchener found the constant arguments and discussions of matters on which he rightly considered the Army Headquarters the proper authority grew more and more oppressive. The ability of the military officers of the Secretariat and their knowledge of military matters already described produced criticisms which was not their business.

Then came the crisis induced by the well-known incident in which a junior military officer of the Secretariat had written on some proposal of Lord Kitchener's: "The Commander-in-Chief does not understand the matter at issue," or words to that effect. This as an office *aide memoire* to his own superior was permissible enough. But according to the Chinese system of the Government of India such notes become part of the *dossier*, unless some special order for removal is given. Also according to custom the notes on any special case are printed up and copies distributed to all Members of the Council and their departments. When this happened and Lord Kitchener found a very junior officer of the Army thus noting, his gorge rose, and he swore to end so pernicious a system and all its works.

He said that the War Minister and the head of the Army must be the same, that while it was proper for India to have a military man as War Minister it was a relic of past days when the Commander-in-Chief used to take the field to have a separate military adviser of Government, and only resulted in vexation and confusion. Lord Curzon and Sir Edmund Elles strongly opposed these views, but those marshalled by Sir Beauchamp Duff, then Adjutant-General, for Lord Kitchener prevailed. Lord Curzon, who had gone Home for a rest prior to an extension of his Viceroyalty, was allowed to return without being told

that he would not be supported in this matter, and that is the gravamen of Lord Ronaldshay's statement regarding the treatment of Lord Curzon by the Cabinet. The new proposal was that the Commander-in-Chief should be ex-officio War Minister with the new title of "Army" member, and would be thus head of the War Ministry, henceforth to be known as the "Army Department," which, as at the War Office, would also include the military heads.

THE MILITARY SUPPLY MEMBER

Nevertheless one practical concession was made to Lord Curzon's desire not to be solely dependent on the advice of the Commander-in-Chief. A new Department of Government was formed, to be called the Military Supply Department, which was to administer those manufacturing and supply departments hitherto directly under the Military Member. Certain adjustments were made in the supply organization to make the Army complete in its machinery of storing and issue, but all purchase and production was to be under the Supply Member. This was in itself a statesman-like conception in that it made the Army Member responsible for policy and the Military Supply Member for provision, and it did foreshadow the war-time necessity of a minister of munitions. It was over the actual appointment to this new office that Lord Curzon resigned the Viceroyalty. His nominee was not approved, the officer selected, Sir Edmund Barrow, being, it was supposed, too much in the "other" camp to work well with the new Army Member. On this last straw of contumely the resignation was based.

At the time when I joined Army Headquarters, Major General Scott was Military Supply Member, he having originally been the Director-General of Ordnance. The new organization was working efficiently, but it contained one flaw in principle in that the

Arsenals, which were merely the stores at which the Army dealt, were not under Army Headquarters, but for matters of convenience were with the same authority of the factories. The organization, though sound in war time, was too costly for peace, and very shortly after this the whole of the Supply Membership was abolished and the duties taken over by the heads at Army Headquarters, including production, thus saving the whole cost of a secretariat and member. Folks said that Lord Kitchener with his love of knight's moves had only let this department be set up for the sake of knocking it down later as a concession to the Finance Department, and had always intended that he should control the lot. *Moi, Je ne sais pas !* At any rate there is the story in outline, and Army business was immeasurably improved by the changes.

A THREAT OF WAR

And here I may give the true version of a yarn that a relative in the Artillery told me only the other day, viz. that I had got on because I had helped Cowans and Sir Beauchamp Duff out of a hat, by sitting up all night and making up a plan for an Afghan War, that was not ready, but which they had told Lord Kitchener was ready. There was something in the yarn, but it was more than a night, and some one had certainly told Lord Kitchener a whacker.

It may be remembered how in this year of grace 1907 the Frontier had been somewhat disturbed. Sir James Willcocks, whom the Army knew as "James by the Grace," presumably for some order and intimation that the young officers thought quaint, had first of all tackled the Mohmands once again, and had also put it across the Zakkha Khel, that most *yaghi*¹ of Afridi tribes, who feared neither God nor man. Then the Frontier settled down for the harvest and everyone

¹ *Yaghi*—turbulent.

went on summer leave. Suddenly trouble arose beyond the Khaiber. Landi-kotal, the headquarters of the Khaiber Rifles, was attacked, and we thought for awhile that Afghanistan was at the bottom of it, and that we might be in for an Afghan War. Everyone on leave in India from the first two and a little later the first four divisions were recalled, and Northern India hummed with excitement.

Now shortly after I had joined Headquarters, Colonel Mullaly, the Director (I can't go on using the cumbrous term of "Officer-in-Charge") of Military Operations, proceeded on leave to England, and Jack Cowans, the D.M.T. and S.D., was appointed to officiate for him. Shortly afterwards the A.Q.M.G. (corresponding to G.S.O.1) of the Mobilization and War Preparation Branch went higher, and to my gratification I found myself appointed to his place for the remainder of my Staff tenure. It was quite the most interesting of all the First Grade appointments in the Operations Division, the other A.Q.M.G.'s being Kirkpatrick ¹ in the Strategical Section and Malleson ² in the Intelligence Section.

I had not been many weeks at the job when the Afghan excitement referred to occurred. Lord Kitchener sent for the Chief of the Staff and said he should like to look at the scheme for an Afghan War. The Chief of the Staff sent for the D.M.O. The D.M.O. came back to get it and then we found there was not one. Colonel Mullaly had been hard at work with his great scheme for reinforcing Afghanistan to repel Russian aggression, plans on which the whole of Lord Kitchener's reorganization was based. We had plans of movement, railway blocks, mobilization schemes for that and also for every possible Frontier trouble, but not a word about Afghanistan as an enemy. Not

¹ Now Lieut.-General Sir George Kirkpatrick, K.C.B., K.C.S.I.

² Now Major-General Sir Wilfrid Malleson, K.C.I.E., C.B.

only that, but Cowans found that the whole of the Russian schemes were based on an academic grouping of homogeneous all-British and all-Indian brigades. It was, as I pressed on him, no possible sort of scheme for our present needs.

It was felt that it would let Lord Kitchener down very much with the Viceroy who had asked him about it, if we told him that nothing was ready, so one of those good tarrydiddles was produced. The scheme had been revised, and was with the press. Then Kirkpatrick was told to get the strategy arranged with the D.M.O., and I was to lay to with the organization. We were to scrap all homogeneous brigades and revert to the well-known one British to three Indian battalions. I happily had A. G. Stuart as my D.A.Q.M.G. and two stout Staff Captains, R. B. Moberly and E. F. Orton, both just out from Camberley and under the new dispensation brought up to Army Headquarters. Then we found what I suspected, that the medical arrangements were *pour rire*, and that they had never yet been properly handled. Lord Kitchener was not very favourable to medical authorities who wanted to spend money, and the mobilization branch in the medical directorate did not know too much about its job. I asked for our P.M.O. from the Derajat, wise old Johnston Shearer who really knew something of the subject, to come up on special duty. And then we lay down to it, with a special section of the general press and also the monotype at our disposal.

For three days and three nights we worked away at the whole scheme, tactical, administrative, mobilization, concentration and the like. We very soon found that a good many units were still wanting for administrative services, services of which the Operations Section had not yet got a proper grip. We invented some then and there, and we adopted the War Office nomenclature where possible. We found that for⁴

some reason, worthy of Pekin, a policy had reigned of having different nomenclature for various services to that in use at Home—"to avoid confusion," though well calculated to create it a thousandfold. We made new units on paper, we drew up a tentative "War-Establishments" and sat the services down to see how to mobilize them.

In fact at high pressure we were able to fill in the various gaps which the preparation of the Russian scheme had not yet found out, and in three days the press produced for us an extremely plausible and fairly practicable scheme of going to war in Afghanistan with that country as an enemy rather than an ally.

The Chief of the Staff was good enough to send for me, and say I had made my reputation and my future was assured. A word of praise is a very welcome thing, and for one man it spoils there will be twenty it stimulates! Jack Cowans' recognition at the time was even more cordial.

Sir Beauchamp then ordered that the homogeneous brigade scheme should be abandoned, and that the Russian War scheme was to be re-drafted on the same basis as we had worked in our Afghan plans. I should have said that Kirkpatrick's D.A.Q.M.G., who worked with us at high pressure, was Andrew Skeen,¹ of the 24th Punjabis, destined later to be Chief of the General Staff in India.

THE ROMANCE OF SIMLA

It is not merely the fact of being at the hub of a great continent that attracts at Simla. It is the concentrated romance of it, if you can remember to think of it, that is so well worth while. Often riding round Jakkho I have pinched myself and said, "Do you remember that this is Simla, the Simla of Mrs. Hawksbee and Viceroys and scarlet and gold Chaprassisis

¹ Lieut.-General Sir Andrew Skeen, K.C.B., K.C.I.E.

with daggers; of picnics at Annandale where once they held Archery meetings, the Archery meeting of Anthony Barsaggot, the man from whom horses shied when he smiled; of Pluffles, and wicked Mrs. Reiver and Todd's Amendment!" And always would I take a pull and say to myself, "Of course it is," and give my hat a cock, and look to see if anyone exciting was coming, for to this day the tale of the Phantom Rickshaw is retold. "Have you heard, the Phantom Rickshaw has been seen round Jakkho?" And everyone looks quite scared.

Simla is the most beautiful of places now as ever it was, and though it is bigger and larger than in the days of fable, and life more complicated, yet the old romance is there for all to see who will remember. At a Viceroy's ball you really can feel that you are part of the story, especially if you are in scarlet and gold too, and the lass with you, as she probably is, is very beautiful.

That first summer at Simla was pleasant enough. Houses of course to suit a major's pocket were hard to come by and we were late in the market, but we got one high up on Jakkho, "Horseheath," with a good tennis court. It belonged to a well-known character in Simla, a Mrs. James, widow of a gunner officer and mother of Lionel James, the author and journalist. But it was far above the Mall, and it was a very tearful wife who arrived there after a long journey and vowed she would never be able to go down again. But she did, and the air was glorious for the children, and the whole place wild and peaceful with the great panorama of snow that met your eye every morning and always struck you anew.

But what always has interested me most at Simla, in the various periods that I have spent there, are the interesting people, and the stories that are to be discovered. The house that till recently belonged to

Lady Ker was the one in which the famous tripartite treaty between Lord Auckland the Governor-General, Shah Shujah the deposed King of Afghanistan, and Runjhit Singh Maharajah of the Punjab was signed, whereby it was agreed that the Shah should be restored to the throne of his fathers and that we three should agree to live in peace and "amitee."

Then there are many relics in people. Mr. O'Meara, the well-known dentist, was son of that Surgeon O'Meara who had been with Napoleon in Elba, who had called his house Longwood and had brought weeping willows from Napoleon's grave, from which many descendants now flourish in Simla Gardens. A granddaughter of Marshal MacDonald taught French in Simla to Staff College students and would display the Marshal's Cross of the Legion to her pupils.

Luchman Halwai, the sweet-seller, the putative grandson of the Earl of Portmore, had not long left his pitch in the cutting known as the Khyber Pass, by a house known to this day to all Jhampannis as Luchman Halwai Ki Kothi. And the story of it is in this wise. Many years ago there joined the Army of the East India Company a certain lad, C—— by name, said to be the illegitimate son of the Earl of Portmore. As years rolled by Colonel C—— had gone on the invalid establishment and had come to reside in Simla, and had built himself a house which still stands and which he called Portmore. Further, he married a hill girl, who may, for ought I know, have suggested the story of "Lispeth of the Mission." And for her he built the country-house now at Mahasu known as Elizabeth's Bower, which folks say she haunts to this day. But Elizabeth was with child to a hill-man when the Colonel married her, and the Colonel fathered the child and allowed him to be brought up in his compound. As Luchman Halwai, or Luchman the Sweet-seller, he sold sweets to children

and *biddis*¹ to Jampannis, and passed the time of day for many a year on end to the Sahibs who went by, as a privileged hill-man should who is born under the protection of a scion of a noble family. And his pitch was close by the house which is now the Maharajah of Patiala's, and it was not for many years till a new Municipal Secretary cleared him out, that poor Luchman went to reside in Chota Simla and died of a broken heart. Elizabeth lived and died eventually in a house called Juba and was buried in the garden, till quite recently, when some one wanted a tennis court, and they moved her body to the cemetery. So sleeps the beauty of times gone by, a nuisance to a younger generation. A few of us like to tarry by the old cemeteries that are now buried in the growing forest but are hard by the Mall, and see some memories of times that are gone. Half the history of India lies in the forgotten cemeteries and cantonments that are often deserted and in which but gate-posts show where houses stood, and only the gravestones remain, for, as Kipling says, "The English scatter their dead round the world like cigar-ends."

This was 1907, and therefore very modern, and the place hummed with fashion and life and hospitality. For a freak *more suo*, Jack Cowans gave his "Heaven and Hell" dinner round which many stories have grown up. It was in the old Châlet, which though not so roomy was far more fascinating than the new one, and the Châlet, it may be explained, is an *annexe* to the United Service Club, sacred to dinners by private members, ball suppers and the like, exclusive and therefore talked of. Jack Cowans' dinner was to the more fashionable and livelier *bints* and the likelier lads, and the reception-room was decorated to represent heaven, while the dining-room, to which you descended, was to represent hell. The waiters were

¹ A rough cigar of country tobacco.

72 SIMLA, UNDER LORD KITCHENER

dressed as devils ; spiders, demons and the like hung from the roofs, and crawly things seemed to hang from the roof of the staircase, so that little screams on the way to dinner met the ear. All very harmless and trivial and nothing to what bright young people of to-day would indulge in. But mammas had heard of its planning, and several daughters were forbidden to go, so that one or two deserted clandestinely the parental board and left gaps in the official dinners, the which was a scandal. Lord Kitchener, it was said, had been told to scold his Director of Military Training and Staff Duties for levity, but as Lord Kitchener fed out of Jack Cowans' hand, and actually chose the curtains for his apartments in the Club, it is not likely that much came of it. It was the same Jack Cowans that all men and nearly all women loved, who was the best Quartermaster-General to the Forces that the world has yet known, and who held his seat in Whitehall against all intrigues from the beginning to the end of the War, and whose mobilization arrangements worked without a hitch.

SIPI FAIR

Many folk have written of Sipi Fair, but because I love the beautiful valley where it is held and the hill folk who go to it, I will tell the story again in my own words.

Simla has a charming hinterland of English forest, oak and hazel, *Pinus excelsa* and *longifolia*, the spruce, the Norwegian pine and the *Deodar*, with wild flowers and saxifrages and the like, and you ride out on a fairly level road to the suburb of Mashobra, where folk have charming cottages, and frolic of Sundays and holidays. Far down below Mashobra spur, on the site that faces the snows, lies the little old Hindu temple of Sipi, set in a grove of old deodars, which are but first cousins to *Lebani* and can behave as such,

spreading out their branches into wide table-topped trees, the *tafel kop* of South Africa, and standing with a peace and dignity untold on soft velvety turf. And because we are clinging high in the Himalay and getting close to Thibet and Tartar influences, however unconscious, the temple eaves have a tendency to curl up, like the ear-flaps of Puck's cap, which is Tartar taste as all the world should know, and you see it also as you leave Aryan Persia and come to the shores of the Caspian Sea.

On this sward under the old deodars, once a year the hill folk, who are Rajputs of sorts, love to come to pay Peter's pence to the priest of the curly-eaved temple and to dance on the sward. Time was, too, when girls who wanted husbands were for sale and sat coyly in lines on little terraced slopes so that man might see the goods that might be his for a bargain of worth and a price of honour. Now the good ways of the British have somewhat changed all that, and the affiancing is done in perhaps more seemly fashion, but still the young women come in their green and plum-coloured trouserings and embroidered waistcoats, vastly like Carlsbad plums with a sweet Aryan face atop, and chatter and smile and look as delightful as if they were for sale.

Sipi Fair is rather spoilt by the bazaar folk from Simla, somewhat dissolute retainers who flock there, and for whose benefit crown and anchor boards appear, while the village folk are made thrice happy by a rought great-wheel, which some enterprising entertainer erects.

Of course all the *tamasha-wallahs*¹ come in from many miles, conjurers and snake-charmers and poor old bears with rings through their noses, and every sort of fortune-teller and astrologer and horoscope-caster, while the small boys buy tiddlers and the women

¹ Performers.

very, very pink soap, and all the rubbish that Europe now makes for Eastern bazaars.

To climb back is a weary way, and once on a side track I stooped awhile and something coughed. I looked at it, for it was an "it," and it joined its hands as if praying for alms. Then I saw that it once had had a face. My Indian groom said "a bear has done that," and then I remembered the story of Adam Zad, "the bear that walked like a man," and how Matun the old blind beggar, once Matun the villager, had met him.

"Flesh like slagg in the furnace, knobbed and withered and grey,

Eyeless, noseless and lipless, asking a dole at the door,
Matun the old blind beggar, telling it o'er and o'er."

I was reminded of it once at Tunbridge Wells early in the war, seeing two wounded Belgians. And that was that, and Kipling's origins are a quest of their own. But some there be, unfortunates, who don't find Sipi Fair worth going to.

CHAPTER V

LAHORE, SIMLA AND THE DURBAR

BACK TO REGIMENTAL DUTY

SEVEN months at Simla brought my first tour of Staff work to an end, and I found myself posted to the command of the 37th Battery R.F.A. at Lahore Cantonment, which had once been Mian Mir of evil memory. Mian Mir, with its memories of cholera and ill-health, was the Headquarters of the Lahore Division, and General Walter Kitchener, known in Egypt as "The Mudir," had till recently been in command. Well gardened, amply irrigated by canal water and planted with magnificent trees, it was in many ways one vast park. The story ran that it had been selected by Sir Charles Napier when commanding the force at Lahore in 1849. Irritated by his Engineers telling him there was no place for a cantonment near Lahore, it is said that he galloped out to the plain near the shrine of the Moslem Saint Mian Mir, on which the old Sikh Army used to exercise, and driving in the lance of one of his orderlies said, "Here is the centre of the cantonment." They show you the place to this day.

Walter Kitchener and his medical officers, hotly following the malarial vogue, decided that the heavy fever toll would disappear if the water was excluded. Mosquitoes would go, they said, and with the mosquitoes malaria. So they made the great park into a desert, filled up the canals, let many of the fine trees die; but fever, though lessened, still continued. What

had happened was that sandfly fever had hardly then been recognized as an entirely different disease or symptom from malaria.

A great deal of the P.U.O.¹ from which the men suffered apparently was not malaria but sandfly fever. The more dusty the cantonment the more the sandfly flourished. By 1921, when I was Quartermaster-General, this had been realized, for Mesopotamia had produced a fair working knowledge of that little beast and the mischief it worked. The water was re-admitted on more scientific lines, with every precaution against its standing, and the park-like aspect has returned to that magnificent lay-out on which Sir Charles Napier had had built what were at the time the model barracks in India.

To my intense interest I found that the 38th, in Crimean days the "A" Field Battery, and then known from its teams as the "Black Battery," was the one which my father had gone to the Crimea with in 1854, and I was able to add his photograph to those of past officers in the battery album. F. E. Johnson, a gunner of gunners, was our Colonel, and Nicholson, who had been in my term at the "Shop," commanded the other battery, the 4th, with H. E. Salt as the Captain, the good Edward Thackeray being mine. Nicholson retired later to farm in Kent, rejoined in '14, and soon went the way of soldiers. My old General of the Derajat, now Sir Alfred Pearson, commanded the Division, and William Sitwell was his principal Staff officer (not yet termed G.S.O.). It was he who commanded one of our columns under Rochfort in the Boer War, with whom, as I have related, "The Boers is wery angry this morning."

So I was among friends, and very pleasant days I found it, for there is no life in the world like regimental life, at any rate in the days that are gone. To spend

¹ Pyrexia of uncertain origin.

one's life in good batteries, to busy oneself with little else than one's men, one's horses and one's guns, is the gentleman's life *par excellence*. The battery command as a major is the best in the Service, and though for the last fifteen years or so the emphasizing of the brigade organization has somewhat curbed the battery commander, it is still the job of jobs if you want a full day's work of the happy type which is yet not too full.

In India it is better than at Home, 140 horses are good friends, while at Home the horse establishment is too small. The lines and the stables are usually attractive and your own to improve, while the native establishment, grooms and the fighting drivers are but an added interest. Atkins himself is always the same simple adorable creature, very easy to manage if you understand him, improving in many ways out of all knowledge as the education and improvement of the late Victorian institution bears its fruit. The group of the men in L.2, the battery that I first joined, was a typical one of the good county soldier of 1888. As a matter of fact I fancy the men of Agincourt were exactly the same in their ways and their type, their faithfulness and their tiresomeness, and all that makes up the world of a unit. There is another aspect of the British soldier which I have always noticed and which the World War has emphasized, and that is that he positively likes getting killed, which is a very useful trait, and his imperturbable good humour never fails if, and it is an important if, he is properly *led* and *fed*. "L" and "F" are what matters, with plenty of stress on the "F."

I always regret that we have not more intimate knowledge of what it was like in the ranks in the days of Crecy and Agincourt and that long period when half France was British. It is in some ways a lost story of surpassing interest. But I think that Con-

tinental memory records the importance of "F." The Briton must be fed and "bayonets" without beef are of less account.

The undying devotion of Atkins to Redvers Buller was undoubtedly due not only to the aplomb of his appearance and address, but to the fact that he fed them first and last, and fed them well. The troops on the march saw the twenty yoke of oxen of the ox-wagons lumbering their rum issue to the front, and all was well.

A MUTINY YARN

Here is a Mutiny yarn which tells you the ways and modes of thought in which the mind of Atkins moved. At the siege of Delhi in 1857 a battalion of the Bengal Fusiliers had so distinguished itself that it was bidden elect a man to receive the Victoria Cross. They did so, and somewhat to the surprise of the officers the men unanimously chose their canteen sergeant for that month, who in due course was honoured. An officer, to whom the ways of Atkins was always a joy, discovered the reason. In the field, when rum was a daily ration, the men would file past the canteen sergeant, each with his mess tin, and into this the sergeant would pour the tot of rum, from the little copper tot measure which had no handle and which was held usually between finger and thumb, the tip of the latter inside. Thus the sergeant saved for himself each day close on a thousand times the thickness of his thumb tip. It was a fair perquisite and so recognized, but this particular sergeant helped the measure in with finger and thumb *both* outside, and such self-denial deserved formal recognition from the regiment, so that they chose him unanimously for the "Cross."

Our mess was redolent of Mutiny memories, for it was there that the ball was held in May from which the officers went to the disarmament parade of the

garrison which practically saved the Punjab, the officers grumbling intensely at so early a turn-out to which they went straight from the ball-room. Many of our pieces of plate had belonged to the Bengal Artillery and we were one of the messes that shared in the yearly pipe of Madeira. D. Olpherts, brother of "Hell-fire Jack," commanded the troop of horse artillery on the disarmament parade, and I once met an old stationmaster who told me that he had been trumpeter in the troop, and that (which no history records) the moment the Sepoys had piled arms, Olpherts on his own galloped his troop up and came into action among the arms, lest any thought of retaking them should seize the soldiery.

SIMLA AGAIN

I was soon to reap the fruit of Sir Beauchamp Duff's goodwill. After a year at regimental duty I found myself away from the happy life of a battery and offered an appointment as G.S.O.2 to form the new Staff Duties Section in the Directorate of Training and Staff Duties. Times had changed in the year, for Lord Kitchener had gone, and Sir O'Moore Creagh had succeeded him. The good Lord Morley had considered that the nomination of his successor by an incumbent of any office was contrary to all Liberal principles, and so Sir Beauchamp was not destined to succeed his chief. General Sir O'Moore Creagh, V.C., the Military Secretary at the India Office, was appointed instead, a tough old soldier who had gained a V.C., the only time he was ever in action, at Kam Dakar on the line of communications to Kabul in the Second Afghan War. He had shown character while commanding the troops in South China during the Boxer trouble, and that was the sum of his experience. *Grande Guerre* and its preparation were strange subjects to him. Following on the formation of the

General Staff at Home the Art of War Branch at Army Headquarters became what it virtually was already—the General Staff. Sir O'Moore gave powerful proof of his desire to be progressive when he appointed Sir Douglas Haig, who had been Inspector-General of Cavalry in India, to be the first Chief of the General Staff.

I joined his branch of the Staff very happily, and we found a house, Shamrock Bank, near Chota Simla Bazaar, that suited us admirably. And work began in good earnest. We were to bring the whole system up to the standard and scale of the new Field Service Regulations, in which Sir Douglas originally had so large a hand. For the first time a rule of war, and, what was even more essential, a system of war administration, was evolved and accepted for the whole Empire.

Two years' work at Simla now commenced without anything remarkable or eventful, though I was fortunate enough in having my name sent forward by Sir Douglas for a Brevet Lieutenant-Colonelcy. I also found myself one of Sir Douglas' "golden-haired boys," and constantly selected by him for work in connection with his Staff tours, usually being detailed to command the enemy against him, and thus assist to bring out the lesson and system of battle in which he was training himself and his Staff. The preparation for counter-attack and the selection of a position which made a counter-attack the leading feature was his doctrine of battle.

TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION

Among other items of preparation for war, that of the Transport Corps was the most important. The lessons of '97 had been pretty fully learnt, and there were now "standing" transport corps in considerable numbers. These consisted of Mule Corps, both cart

and pack, and also cadres to be expanded by impressment. These units were stationed all over India, so that they could earn their keep in station duties and obviate hiring contractor's carriage. But it was realized that camels must and could still be the bulk of the transport for heavy baggage such as tents, as it always had been. Railways had done much to reduce the old pack transport in India, and the coming of the canals was reducing and would still more reduce the old scrub-clad deserts of the Punjab in which camels thrived. But nevertheless three different kinds of Camel Corps stood on the mobilization rôle of which only the first category had any real existence. These were the Sillahdar Camel Corps, organized on a mixture of the Sillahdar Cavalry system and our own British Militia. That is to say, men drew all-in pay to provide camels, while only a third at a time were called up and did work, and the rest of the year they went about their vocations. This was a thoroughly efficient organization. The second category was the "Grantee" Camel Corps, in which the Civil Government of the Punjab, mindful of the troubles of '97, gladly aided. Grant of lands in certain of the new Canal Colonies made the keeping of camels and the assembling of them with retainers for ten days a year, and available on mobilization, as one of the conditions of the grant. The third category were the Hired Camel Corps, which existed only on paper, but for whom Headquarters equipment were stored, places of assembly settled, and supervising personnel told off from corps not detailed for the Field Army. Many of these corps would of necessity be filled by Ghilzai camels from Afghanistan in much the same way as these folk had rallied to us in the Afghan Wars. While to a certain extent their availability would depend on the attitude of the Amir, our major case then was on behalf of Afghanistan and our objective those attacking her. Further, the past

had shown that many of the camel-owning tribes were not sufficiently attached to Afghan rule to mind supplying us with camels under any circumstances.

These with certain arrangements for the enumeration of animals in the Punjab under a post-'97 Impressment-of-Carriage Act, practically assured that the evils of that year would not be repeated.

These arrangements now came under my ken, and it was obvious that the organizations prepared by Lord Kitchener's departments were wise and efficient.

THE MODERNIZING OF THE ARMY

While Sir Douglas was doing all that was possible to modernize the training of the Army and bring its Staff doctrine into harmony with that at the War Office, the effects of the reorganization of the personnel of the Indian Army, which had been so developed under Lord Kitchener, was beginning to bear ample fruit. A great study had been made by the Adjutant-General's branch of the various classes which were fit for the arduous conditions of war against Afghan or Frontier and European foes. Not only were the lesser breeds and those which had deteriorated from their martial estate by years of the Pax Britannica eliminated, but a careful grouping into class companies and a fostering of the spirit and special aptitudes of each class had brought the rank and file to a state of efficiency never yet attained by the Indian Army. Races hitherto not tapped had been attracted to the Army, and those that had long been enlisted were made the most of. Regimental training, especially training in activity that would make the Army the equal of Afridi and the Wazir on the hill-side, had been the order of the day since the '97 wars, and to this was now to be added the training for European War.

As this phase of India had interested me since my

earliest association with the Indian Army in distant Loralai and had been given Ibbetson's Census Report as my Bible, I had followed it closely and had for many years taken a good deal of interest in the languages. While commanding the 38th Battery at Lahore I had undertaken to lecture on the new quick-firing gun and modern artillery technique to the Indian officers of the 38th Dogras, and had caused some surprise at being able to do so. It had always been my practice, too, to know a little of all the languages as well as the Lingua Franca of Urdu, and pass the time of day to Gurkha, Pathan and Punjabi muleteer, as well as the *ikery-tickery* talk of the Mahratta, a smattering which has so often proved useful. For instance, if you know what happened to the lady who went to Lala Musa you can get a lot out of tired Punjabis, and a little Mahratthi at the end of a long day will help the *Untoo Goorgas* along. Now *Untoo Goorga* is the nickname long forgotten, which the Bengal Army had for the Bombay troops who took part in the siege of Bhurtput in 1826, and so incensed them that General Orders forbade its use. The *Untoo Goorgas* in my old Bombay Battery were dear hard people and I loved their quaint chat.

So it came about that at this time I and Major A. C. Lovett of the Gloucesters, who loved India and the Indian soldier as much as I did, put our heads together, and conceived the idea of bringing out an up-to-date book on the Indian Army to appear at the time of the King's visit. I was to do the book, and he, being an artist of merit, the pictures, chiefly types of the various races in the Indian Army, to illustrate the grouping to which I have referred. It was a quaint notion that two officers of the British Service should do it, but do it we did with some success, Lord Roberts writing us an appreciative foreword. A. and C. Black brought it out in the "Beautiful Book" series. It

was a costly book and we had to part with the copyright, and among other things the pictures were produced by Black in a charming postcard series.

During these years, too, I developed my writing for Blackwood and Cornhill, and published some of the stories later in book form under the title of *Pike and Carronade*.¹ India and South Africa were full of dramatic stories and incidents which were worth telling.

THE STAFF ORGANIZATION

Curiously enough Lord Morley had not only forbidden schemes for taking an Indian Army to Persia or Mesopotamia being studied or planned, but said that such an idea as the despatch of an Indian Contingent to Europe was on no account to be planned or provided for. Yet the War Office was already earnestly preparing for the inevitable war with Germany which was casting its shadow before! Sir Douglas therefore had the whole problem of an Indian Force for Europe studied under other names as an exercise in strategy and organization. The scheme was duly printed for instruction, and a copy sent to the War Office. Thus it came about that when the World War arrived the War Office was in the position of being able to ask that this instructional problem should be put into effect.

But as it fell to my lot as devil for Sir Douglas to work out most of the Staff duty work, I found myself openly accused of endeavouring to "drag the Indian Army at the heels of Whitehall." This, however, only meant that it was my duty to see that the inverted nomenclature and methods of staff work were now remodelled on the system which by agreement of all the Dominion representatives at the Imperial Defence Conferences, was to be introduced throughout the forces of the Empire.

¹ Blackwood.

One of the peculiar ineptitudes of India was that the theory of "Staff" as distinct from "Departments" and "Services" had never been understood. Everybody on the Headquarters of any formation claimed to be Staff officer and wanted to wear Staff distinctions and issue orders to the troops. If a complaint came in against the work of one of the departments, the departmental officer at Headquarters would investigate it and often uphold his own subordinate against the troops, and the Staff proper never saw it at all.

At Quetta, for instance, in spite of many orders, we found that Sir Henry Sclater, commanding the division, had ordered his doctor and his sapper and his supply officer to wear aiguillettes and full dress. The aiguillettes did not matter, but the principle involved was most serious, and even remained *sub rosa* in the days of the World War, and added to some extent to the Mesopotamian failure, as I will demonstrate later. In India everything tends to go upside-down as soon as you have put it straight and your back is turned, and it is the occasional spells of long leave which perhaps accounts for this.

I always call this the "Curse of the Robin," for just as in India the Robin's red patch is inverted, so does everything else tend to turn upside-down at every opportunity.

My immediate Chief was Sidney Powell,¹ who had come for the express purpose of boosting the signal service on to modern lines, and John Headlam² was now our director. The work that Sir Douglas gave me often took me on tour with him, and if he liked a man he was the most lovable of masters, with the sweetest smile and personal charm that ever opened

¹ Now Major-General S. H. Powell, C.B., C.M.G.

² Now Major-General Sir John Headlam, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., Colonel Commandant the Royal Artillery.

a junior's heart. Those who were serving under him then, knew what a master of modern war he was, and most especially the complicated system of organization and administration that alone could make it possible. His minutes on paper were a marvel of brief lucidity which made more curious his supreme disability when called on to talk. Shyness that was overpowering mastered him, and his address at a pow-wow would be most futile, though all the time he knew far more on the matter at issue than anyone else. From my memory of those days I realize what a handicap this must have been in impressing his personality, his wonderful personality, on the statesmen, and also on the French, and no less on those various high commanders of his own whom he had to deal with. Had Haig possessed anything of the gift of the gab, or the art of the flat-catcher, to illuminate the deep recesses of his character and ability, he would have held a position in Europe greater even than the Duke of Wellington at his zenith.

At one of our big Staff rides, held just before the Royal Durbar, Sir O'Moore Creagh came to see the assembled lights and addressed us at the conclusion of Sir Douglas' résumé of the work. And this is what he said :

"Gentlemen, I would have you realize the importance of being able to separate the nut from the crux in these military problems."

And there in a confused nutshell is the secret of life: "the separation of the nut from the crux"! Bless his old Irish heart!

A little before he had charmed us when, a guest at the Staff College dinner at Simla, it had pleased him to expand on the importance of character as distinct from such bogus learning as the College purveyed us. "Gentlemen, ye may tache a poodle thricks, but ye can't tache him to draa a badger," to which we cheered

loudly, for we too held the same commanding sentiment.

We used to have these dinners at the Châlet, and the next one I was to attend as Q.M.G., when some young devil managed to incite the principal Staff Officers to cock fighting and I floored the Adjutant-General; but young Archie Montgomery, the Director of Military Operations, and a sometime subaltern of mine, whose legs were even longer, flung me into a corner. Incidentally they nearly killed the Chief of the General Staff, for hearts at 7,000 feet above the sea should cease these games at forty.

But Simla is a place where one may unbend on occasion, and there it is *dulce et decorum desipere in loco* and let the *crux* look after itself.

THE KING IN INDIA

Before we had been long at Simla the good Lord Minto's most successful reign came to an end to everyone's regret, and none more so than to us personally, who had received many kindnesses at the Viceroy and Lady Minto's hands. His human side appealed to me since I once met him walking at the back of Jakho in shooting suit alone with his retriever. I doffed my cap, but was only answered by a wink, as much as to say, "Young man, don't take notice of me, don't you see I'm on the spree." He was going to tea evidently with a fairy hard by.

To him succeeded Lord Hardinge, who appealed more to the Indian personality than even the courtly and kindly Lord Minto, and in his reign came the memorable visit of His Majesty. I was privileged to take part in that most remarkable pageantry the world has ever seen—the Royal Durbar at Delhi, and what took my fancy was the astounding devotion and enthusiasm which the country population who had been brought in from many miles evinced. There had

been no King at Delhi for many generations, and a King was what India wanted and understood—a *Badshah* with a very big "B." I saw the crowd after the Durbar flock to lay its forehead on the steps of the throne in real unfeigned affection and devotion. The military pageant too was superb, and it was a romantic thing each day to hear the roll of the sheepskins and throbs of the *dole*, and the thrill of the pipe and fife and *surmai* as the troops moved off to their various functions.

People there were who commented on the silence with which the King Emperor and his procession was received through the crowded bazaars of Delhi. But the last time a King rode in Delhi anyone who raised a voice would have had short shrift, for silence means respect in the East and the King speaks first.

In my own humble way I had realized this in Mesopotamia. There the Pasha rides incog. and no one would interrupt his silence. If he wants recognition he will give it first. When I rode through the market squares of Basra, and later as Commander-in-Chief through the bazaars of Bagdad, I rode also in silence, unless it pleased me to call "*As Salaam aleikum*," and then the crowd would spring up and from them would come the answer happily enough, "*Wa aleikum Salaam*," and that was the dignified way of life. Of late we have taught the Indian crowds to cheer, but why we want the cheers of sweeper and bazaar loafer has always beaten my comprehension.

Also I saw the quite inexcusable sulkiness of the Nizam in rendering homage and the gross impertinence of Holkar, impertinence so gross that the guardsman in his bearskin behind His Majesty should well have been told to take notice. It does not pay in the East to let pip-squeaks beard the mighty, and of all people the King Emperor of Albion and all that Albion's Empire stands for.

CHAPTER VI

DUTY AT THE WAR OFFICE

WHITEHALL

I WAS now to meet with a different turn to my fortunes, for Jack Cowans was Director-General of the Territorial Force and Quartermaster-General-Elect to the Forces, and not unmindful of my days with him at Simla. At the end of 1911 I received a charming and flattering letter from him.

"The arrangements for sending the Army to the Continent are nearly ready, with the exception that the horsing question is quite untouched. We have to get a very large number of horses on mobilization and there is no arrangement or organization in existence. They are making a new post in the Remount Directorate for horse mobilization and I want you to come and fill it. I know no one else who could do it. If you are successful, you can ask for anything you like. I will try and get the Treasury to make a first-grade job, and I have written to Haig to ask him to let you come. You will find it a good thing to have some experience here."

Sir Douglas had also heard by the same mail and sent for me. He would not stand in my way, and he was destined for the Aldershot Command almost at once. He also dwelt on the fact that the horse question, needing close on 160,000 horses in a very few days, had not even been touched. So to the War Office I went, though I found that the Treasury *more suo* had refused to let the new appointment at present

be more than second grade. I was also shown an amusing if flattering case about myself. Lord Nicholson, the C.G.S., in accordance with an arrangement that had been made by the Treasury that officers serving in India should not be brought Home for Staff appointments, had demurred at my coming. Jack had insisted in no measured terms, saying that he could not be expected to carry out one of the most difficult jobs in his new department if he could not have the man he asked for. Lord Nicholson had grudgingly written, "I suppose you must have your 'black swan,'" and so it was settled, and I found myself referred to in the Military Secretary's branch as the "Black Swan."

General Cowans was still with the Territorial Force and Sir Herbert Miles was in his Q.M.G.'s chair, and twinkled at me when I went to see him, and said, "So I see you've left the General Staff," and then feigned total ignorance of everything in India and appeared surprised to hear that anything approaching a recognizable Army system prevailed there.

THE REMOUNT¹ ORGANIZATION

I found that I was expected to begin work without even a week's holiday, so urgent was the situation. The Remount Directorate at the moment was still, as originally designed by the Esher Committee, part of a horse directorate. Major-General Heath of the Army Service Corps was Director of Remounts and Transport, and had under him an Army Transport Section and a Remount Section, and also the Director of Veterinary Services. The concentrating of all horse matters in the Q.M.G.'s services under one director

¹ It should be noted that "Remount" is in itself an inaccurate term, time-honoured however in its military application. The Remount Department provides horses for the Army as well as "remounts" to fill casualties.

was of course sound, but the placing of the Veterinary Department under someone less than the Q.M.G. hurt the feelings of the profession, who made representations to General Cowans. He for expediency supported their views and also those of the R.A.S.C. that supplies and transport should be under one man. That in theory was a retrograde step, but it fitted the idiosyncrasies of the British Service, and so General Heath's directorate was broken up into two, viz. Remounts and Veterinary, and the horsed transport went away to the Director of Supply and Transport, each director being under the Q.M.G. himself.

When I took over my work, however, Colonel Jack Fowle, C.B., D.S.O., late of the 21st Hussars, was the Assistant Director at the head of the Remounts with a Staff Captain, Quartermaster and an officer clerk, the latter the most valuable authority on the live horse, dear crippled old Major Cox, late of the Norfolk Regiment, the most delightful person I have known, and always affectionately spoken of, in the War Office and out, as the "Old B—— by the Window." He was stuck stiff by arthritis, that had come on after some long *dour* with the mounted infantry in Egypt, and could hardly crawl, but once in his chair by the window he was very much all there and a tower of strength to Jack Fowle and myself, in the matter of advice, as he also was on the committee of the Naval and Military, where many regret him to this day, for he passed away during the War.

To his great disappointment Jack Fowle did not get the newly-created directorship, and Major-General Birkbeck was appointed. Folk said that he had crossed Jack Cowans in the matter of a skirt, in days gone by, for he was a most attractive creature, but with Birkbeck unemployed with his remount record it was not possible to overlook him. So jolly old Brickbat became my master, and a very charming

one I found him. What I wanted was to be let run my new show, and not be interfered with, more than by wise advice and direction, and this he did for me. On Fowle's tenure terminating I was appointed Assistant Director, and he went to Ireland as Inspector. Shortly afterwards I found myself with two or three others gazetted to the much-envied Brevet Lieut.-Colonelcy.

THE REMOUNT PROBLEM

The remount problem was now dividing itself into two separate parts—parts that had really little connection—the “live horse,” i.e. the actual purchase and well-being of the serving Army horse, and the “paper horse,” the animal that in peace time only existed on paper in forms and schedules. This was my pigeon. The peace establishment of horse for the United Kingdom was 20,000, and the war establishment, including a first reserve for the whole Army, was close on 60,000 for the Expeditionary Force, 100,000 more for the Territorial Force, viz. an army of twenty infantry divisions and twenty cavalry brigades including the cavalry division, in all.

Towards these 140,000 horses required to mobilize there were supposed to be 10,000 registered horses for which 10s. a year was paid in return for the right to buy when required. To get 130,000 impressment and impressment only would suffice. But impressment means not only a complete machinery of selection and valuation, but also a workable law and civil machinery, and an accurate census of horses from among which impressment could be made. None of these things had existed, but only a police census had been made, almost valueless as regards classification but important as a basis of future work, as it showed to some extent where horses of sorts existed. It also showed that

there was a far larger number of horses in the country than had been imagined.

The summer before I came, a better arrangement had been started by General Cowans in that the adjutants of Territorial units had been ordered to make a census. This they had attempted, grumbling considerably as it was far outside their job,¹ but it confirmed to some extent the police figures. Parliament had just put the law into order, not so much for impressment, which already existed, but made it lawful to enumerate, and enacted that if responsible officers were refused admission into private stables at reasonable hours, a magistrate should issue a search warrant on request. These enactments meant the bringing up-to-date of an old Act of Henry VIII still on the Statute Book, and the inclusion therein of the provisions *re* impressment. To prevent opposition, it was arranged that Jack Cowans should give one of his popular dinners to all Members of Parliament likely to object, and keep them well after the hour the Bill would come up, for of such is the British habit. When inaugurating my new section, I found the new Act and the Territorial Adjutants' unwilling census as data on which to commence work.

People constantly declared that there were not enough horses in the country for an Army of any kind. But our police census had given the lie to that. There were evidently enough horses of sorts to be organized. One of the problems was that for a summer mobilization the hunters would all be at grass and soft. The light vanner, that is to say the bus and trotting delivery-van class, were the only ones at present dying from the advent of the motor. After much consultation with horse-owners we persuaded Government to offer an annual £4 subsidy for every horse kept that was fit for artillery purposes up to a total of 10,000. It

¹ And indeed many were not competent.

was held, and I think rightly, that this addition to the annual profit and loss account of the stable would make all the difference when trades were deciding whether or no to adopt motors. The condition of the subsidy was to be the same as that for the old registered horse, viz. availability whenever any portion of the Army Reserve was called up. This gave us the important advantage of being able to take these horses for small wars of a kind for which the use of the impressment laws could not be made.

We called both these categories of horses: The Army Horse Reserve "Subsidized" and "Registered" classes, with an establishment of 10,000 in each. The subsidized class filled pretty well, but with the early advent of war the real effect of the subsidy in maintaining the vanner in civil life was never ascertained.

It was soon evident, however, that the light vanner was the difficulty. In the whole of London but one bus then had horses, and it came down Sloane Street and over Battersea Bridge, quite a piece of old England. That there were a good many still in trade life half an hour's counting on the steps of the War Office showed; but it was evident that while there would still be enough for the artillery, the "trains"—that is to say the transport of the Army—could not be horsed in future by trotting "ride and drive" teams.

On the other hand, it was equally evident that the number of heavy horses was legion, as a glance at the dock areas east of London Bridge showed. Lorries had not penetrated there. Nor had they touched the bottle-beer trade between Charing Cross and the Monument—trade in which vans had to pull up and go round corners every other minute—they stayed in horse then, as they have stayed now. The same conditions we found applied to England as a whole.

Then we had a bright thought. Change the teams

from four light draft horses to pair heavy and the drive from postilion to box and long rein. You would have hundreds of thousands of horses, you would shorten the line of march of a division, you would be able to mobilize with drivers who were wagoners. We carried the General Staff and the Ordnance with us, and reprinted the whole of the tables on this new basis. By April, 1914, it was done.

The War Office was constantly being attacked in its whole attitude towards war horses, both the "live" and the "paper" horse, and every sort of panacea, especially with regard to the live horse, was being suggested. Horse life was supposed to be dying, the foreigners were taking our best horses, breeding mares were being brought out of Ireland and the Continent would soon breed its own, etc. We must buy from the breeder and not from the dealer; we must buy as three-year-old and give the breeder a chance, and such like and so forth.

The facts of the case were, however, different, and I am glad to say we resisted all the charlatans.

A cardinal fact to remember is that in the United Kingdom, at any rate at that time, the Army horse was the bottom of the market. In India, on the contrary, he was the top. There breeders got their best prices from the Army. The Army horse at Home, however, is the misfit of the half-bred hunter business. The high-priced hunter market was the breeder's aim, and he got it once in every three or four. The placing of misfits is the difficulty for all breeders. When the hansom cab died the British and Continental Armies were the only markets for the misfits of the hunter breeder. Further, the mares run so small that often enough they are sold to the British cavalry and are own sisters to hundred-guinea hunters (pre-war prices). The pick of the misfits went to the British, and our Army buyers almost always had the run through of

any collection for Continental remount agents, partly from goodwill and partly because our price was a pound or so more.

The matter of buying from the producer is one of the fallacies of the amateur world. If you want drugs you go to a druggist, and if you want horses go to a horse dealer. And what is more, the producer cannot afford to sell direct unless the buyer will take all his produce. If you pick you are no use. A dealer takes everything at a price and grades it. If the Army picked out the best, who would deal with the ruck? In fact, in Ireland, where nothing is free, the dealer would say to anyone who dealt direct with the Army, "I'll boy-cat ye!" And who then would take his rubbish off his hands?

But the nice, kind folk who used to write on the subject to us and the press did not understand these points. Horse producing and buying for the Army is a different problem in each country, and when as Q.M.G.—in India—the remounts were under me, I saw the problem from a different point of view.

The question of buying three-year-olds was different from what it appeared. Breeders of heavy horses could work their colts at two on soft land, and market them at three, over the weighbridge as was the custom of the trade. But breeders of light horses held them by custom whether they liked it or no, till they were four off. If we bought them at three we should have kept them for a year at great expense, and so long as custom and markets made breeders do this, there was no economic cause for the Army to waste its money, nor could we see that by so doing we should stimulate breeding. Further, though it was said that foreigners sometimes bought at three and left us the lesser stuff, the answer to that was that no man could pick a horse at three for what it was to be at four, and that four was a safer time to buy.

And another cardinal factor of the whole problem so far as the Army was concerned was that the horse trade in Great Britain was a very big business in which the Army custom was a very small factor, and could not lead the habit of the trade at all. Further, it was felt, as regards foreign buying, that the more horses in Great Britain, and especially in Ireland, were bought, the more would be bred, and therefore the horse population at any given moment would be greater.

So we went on our way, fairly satisfied that we were on the right road. Incidentally it is interesting to note that our buyers were on the most friendly and yet the most disciplined terms with the dealers. Lieut.-Colonel Wood, the cavalry buyer, affectionately known as "Woodie," had gained their entire confidence. It was his custom to look through the horses produced, he would allow no word to be said to him, would say which he would take, and it was not till their cheque came did the dealers know how many he had classed as troop horses at £40, and how many as chargers at £60.

Harry Ferrar, of the Royal Artillery, was our artillery buyer, and to him horses were as children, to be loved and cherished. He also had established the happiest and most efficient methods, and his horses nearly all were Irish plough-horses, compact and active, and the price was £42. Watching him buy, I learnt a tip that was new to me, that of strapping up a horse's foreleg and making him run two or three times up the yard, whereby wind was as efficiently tested as in a half-mile gallop.

The problem of the cavalry division and mounted brigades was a special one and had recently been dealt with by the Acland Cavalry Committee, which actually did become the Law and the Prophets. The Committee laid down certain principles and proclaimed

certain bedrock facts which it was essential to drum into the ears of the non-expert and the Finance Department. The principles were : *first*, that horses put into the ranks before six years old did not last their full economic life ; *second*, that horses could not be put into military training before close on five years old. The leading fact to be digested was that fit cavalry horses were not immediately available in civil life and impressment would not be effective. The principle we then enunciated and accepted was that every cavalry regiment must have sufficient horses of six and over, on its books, to ensure that the regiment could turn out at war establishment plus 10 per cent. reinforcements.

The net result was that 108 horses over and above war establishment were added to each regiment, and arrangements were to be made for boarding them out with any suitable allottee who cared for a horse at someone else's expense. Racing only was barred and working in trade vehicles. All horses under six were regarded as in training and not in the ranks. This system, though looked on with suspicion by the regimental officers, proved a great success. We had the full number of horses boarded out, and they rejoined on mobilization and were fit for their work. A Reserve Cavalry regiment, chiefly reservists, was to be formed in each cavalry barrack on mobilization, and take over the young horses and fresh remounts for training.

ENUMERATION AND IMPRESSMENT

We must now turn to the far more important matter of the paper horse, more important because we had to find them by the hundred thousand. The General Staff and even the Q.M.G. himself urged on us the importance of the horses for the Expeditionary Force and not to bother so much about the Territorial Force. But we took upon ourselves, in view of the plenitude

of horses existing, to treat them both on the same footing, and did not differentiate except that we saw that the Expeditionary Force had the better if need be, and that there should be no mistake about their dates of readiness.

Enumeration was, however, the first essential, and then the organization of the impressment. There were already Deputy Assistant Directors of Remounts (D.A.D.R.'s) at the Headquarters of commands, retired officers re-employed, and our plans included the division of each command into several remount districts, each with a D.A.D.R. in charge and under each a certain number of remount circles presided over by District Remount Officers (D.R.O.'s). The D.A.D.R.'s were to be concerned with the administration, allotment of horses to units and the finding and handling of mobilization purchasers, and the D.R.O.'s were the actual enumerators. The purchasers were to be country gentlemen, masters of hounds and the like, who undertook the office, and who were to be paid three guineas a day and their travelling expenses on mobilization. A despatch box for each purchaser was maintained to the number of many hundred, containing necessary articles and information, viz.:

Branding irons, cheque books, list of stables where horses would be and how many to take from each (it was important not to strip any particular stables), general instructions as to prices, and tables showing where railway trucks were in waiting to remove the horses each day, with a programme of the purchases in the order required.

Purchasers were given an imprest of £100 and told to hire clerks, offices and householders at their discretion and employ veterinary surgeons.

The question of soundness was cleared up by our instruction that working soundness was all we required, and that a fitness for three months' work in the field

was all that we needed, prices being duly graded. Further, it was impressed on all that the enumeration did not earmark individual horses. A stable was shown as likely to yield so many horses of a type, not more than half being taken from any one owner.

While the enumeration was in progress we were preparing a complete Mobilization Remount Statement, showing every unit to be horsed, and how many horses existed for it (allowing for 10 per cent. sick), and how many were to come from the Remount Department. This statement was framed by Commands. Speaking generally, each Command mounted the units contained in it, and sent a quota to Aldershot. The Aldershot quota and the remount reserves were the pools by means of which we equalized the burden according to the resources of each Command.

The next important item to put on a business footing was the actual impressment machinery. To impress a horse the following documents were required :

A. *A declaration of emergency* by a responsible Military Commander acting in pursuance of an Order in Council.

B. *A requisition* on a magistrate for horses in accordance with A.

C. *The magistrate's order* to the police to requisition the horses indicated by the military authorities.

D. *The constable's demand* on the owner to hand over his horses. This demand contained a notice to say that the price would be assessed by the military purchaser and paid by cheque at once, that the owner could not demur to the price at the time but might appeal to the County Court for enhancement after delivery of the horse.

The Remount Department had made a very great point of payment on the nail rather than the issue of a receipt for which the owner would be paid later, as likely to ease the annoyance of impressment by money

down. In the fixing of price the purchaser was the authority subject to general instructions for guidance.

These four forms were bound up in sets, each form a different colour, with one of "A," "B" and "C" to twenty-five of "D."

By April, 1914, we informed the Q.M.G. that we were ready, and he reported accordingly to the Army Council and Secretary of State, who informed Parliament.

During the last year I had made several trial samplings of the impressment list in circles in Scotland, Wales and England, in country and urban, and felt sure that it would work all right.

The Q.M.G. sent me lecturing to various commands, for the Army itself was most sceptical, and I was authorized to communicate articles to the leading papers. Whereon Lord Esher wrote a letter to say that cheery optimist Colonel MacMunn suffered from two delusions: first, that there were enough horses in England; and, secondly, that even if there were, it was possible to impress them.

When 160,000 horses had been put in their places in fourteen days in August, '14, I wrote to him and told him so, signing myself "the Cheery Optimist," and got a very handsome letter from him in reply.

In Ireland it was not proposed to resort to impressment except in the large cities for gun horses and the like, for it was felt that the purchasers need only chink a bag of sovereigns to get all they wanted.

CHAPTER VII

PREPARATION—AND 1914

THE BROTHERHOOD

THE story of the intensive preparation for war at the War Office has not yet been told. Since the Agadir happenings, which coincided with a railway strike, His Majesty's Government even had been frightened. The Navy had realized how quite unprepared they were for a war in Home waters under modern conditions, and how there was no place where a waiting fleet could lay its vulnerable head. The military attachés and the like coming back from Germany and from the German Manœuvres reported, with grave alarm, that the whole of Germany was concentrating on war, and war that should lay Great Britain at their feet. Those behind the scene were aghast at the short time likely to be available to perfect our arrangements. It was only when hearing Bill Thwaites and Russel of my own regiment talk on their return from German manœuvres, that I myself realized how extremely serious the state of affairs was. They returned in '12 or '13, with absolute conviction that it would come next year or a year later.

Fortunately, thanks largely to Lord Haldane and the workers behind Lord Nicholson, we had a policy, a definite war force. Six war divisions and six mounted brigades for the field army, fourteen divisions and fourteen mounted brigades for the second line. It was not to be an unlimited war on land, we were only to put our little Expeditionary Force into vast

Europe as a grant in aid as it were, but it took a lot of preparation. The men at the War Office of all branches were very much in earnest, and it is hardly too much to say that we were working day and night. The concentration and movement of the Expeditionary Force to France—that remarkable feat of transportation—was being prepared, the administrative services were hard at work, and there was a real psychological bond among us and complete confidence and goodwill. I found myself for the first time in the history of the Remount Department working hand in hand with Staff Duties and the Mobilization Directorate.

Henry Wilson as D.M.O. led the hunt and set the pace. But the General Staff work was largely over when the Order of Battle and the War Establishments were settled, and the preparation problem then became one of administration. Brigadier-General J. S. S. Long, with a remarkably efficient body of officers, was handling supply and transport; Dick Wortley was organizing movement by sea and land, and General Parsons the Ordnance Services, while the Mobilization Directorate under Woodward with Wells and Frith was most active.

It was into this working and happy family that it pleased our statesmen to throw the bombshell of 1914 in the shape of their Ulster policy, and nearly tore the Army and the War Office in two. But of that later. Unconscious of this, the work went on incessantly and with hardly even a holiday, and it is a period that I always look back on with enthusiasm. Outside the Army was working hard also, and the manœuvres culminating at Cambridge marked the apotheosis of training. The pow-wow in the Great Hall at Trinity, His Majesty, and the Provost who slept peacefully through it, being present, was a memorable occasion.

The occasion was remarkable, too, because alone of the foreign military missions the French under

B.S.M.W.

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Castlenau were admitted, and also because the traitor Brigadier-General Beyers, in the uniform of a British General Officer, the Inspector-General of the South African Forces, was there, too, before he went to the German manœuvres to be hypnotized, and it would have seemed a long way then to his expiating rebellion in the Vaal drifts.

The whole country-side seemed to realize what was coming, and even the butchers would shoulder their steels and click their heels in the streets of peaceful Cambridge.

There is a yarn of the next year's manœuvres, the last before the War, which were not so large, that took my fancy.

It was and is the custom to designate some point on a map that is not otherwise indicated by its proximity to a letter in some over-printed name. It was a long wet day and the convoys behind the Army trains and the horsed parks had been waiting drearily. A Staff Officer came down the line and a convoy officer asked if he knew where the divisional camp was. "Close to the top of the 'D' in Dorchester," came the reply, and the voice of a drenched driver of hired transport was heard: "More like the bottom of the 'Y' in bloody, I should say."

Towards the end of 1912 Sir John French asked the Q.M.G. if I could be spared to go as a Professor at the Staff College, always my great ambition. But Cowans, while saying that he would not stand in my way, also said, and I agreed, that I could hardly leave what I was doing.

Indeed, as he put it, horses were the one weak spot. The Secretary of State for War was always being pressed to say that the Army was ready, and the Army Council were always pressing the Q.M.G., and he would not give the assurance until we could tell him that the horse problem was solved.

During these somewhat strenuous days I found a little spare time for literature in writing an historical romance, *A Freelance in Kashmir*, dealing with the days of the European adventurers in India, in the days of Lord Lake, a period that had always fascinated me. It was due to appear in September, 1914, but Messrs. Smith Elder, the publishers, said, "What use at the moment?" So we let it lie till March, 1915, when they said, "No good having a thousand volumes lying here; we must push it out." I had the satisfaction of a splendid review from *The Times*, and also had the supreme honour of being reviewed in *Punch*, and that was about all I got out of it, as the new-book market was for the time dead.

THE IRISH FOLLY

Now that the years have flown, it is remarkable to look back on the supreme ignorance shown by our short-sighted politicians of the dough they were kneading, in dreaming of coercing the Loyal portion of Ireland by the help of the British forces. It was a folly apart from its inherent evil, because the half at least of the officer cadre of the Army and a very great portion of the Navy, hailed from the Protestant Seigneuries of the North or of the "Colony." Not only was this so, but from time immemorial the great soldiers of the Empire have sprung therefrom, to mention but Wellington, Wolseley, Roberts, White and Kitchener of the galaxy. There the tradition of loyalty and the traditional horror of the disloyal was very deeply ingrained. Further, these families were less imbued with the growing desire of the English to forsake the careers of service for those of the fleshpots. To disturb this caste was in itself the act of those super-ignorant of the Empire's cosmogony.

The decision to use the Army and the Navy threatened to tear both those forces in two. It also suddenly

put into antagonism with the rest, in a quite unexpected way, the old Cromwellian instinct of a lesser portion of the Army and Navy cadre. Certain good, kind English folk became dour, and were for carrying out orders. But the Director of Military Operations at the War Office, Major-General Henry Wilson, and Brigadier-General Johnnie Gough, of the General Staff at Aldershot, were bitterly and enthusiastically for the North, which included bitter and enthusiastic loyalty to the Union and the Empire. But so stirred were they, they almost forgot what was due to them as officers. The cabal was strong and active. At the War Office the Ulstermen were very much represented with A. G. Stuart, Ommamy and many another. The lobbying was intense and the atmosphere was unpleasant. Many of the junior officers would drop in to ask my views. I was known to be Protestant Irish in descent but not of the North. Many there were who dared not throw away their bread and butter by resigning their commissions and the like. My advice to all was to sit tight, and that there was hardly any evil so great as defying the authority of Parliament. I am perhaps wiser now.

What can be said of the folly of the minds who were allowing situations of this kind to develop ?

But there was one crowning folly of all, only perhaps possible in mentalities that lie outside the ken of normal human nature, the Mr. Morleys and the Jack Seelys. That the latter, whose handling of the crisis so nearly broke the Army, now appears in dress and rank of a major-general is one of the humours of life, and perhaps he sees it so. That crowning folly was the *asking of soldiers* what they want to do. If Governments are to govern, they must make up their minds, after due discernment, no doubt, but must issue *orders*.

So with "Emperor Arthur" assisting, this poor Army

that was working night and day to be the spear-head of the Empire in the War that was coming, was to be torn as the sport of politicians, and torn most grievously, with the crowning insult of being asked if it would like to obey orders. If you fear a crisis with your Army, issue your orders; and if there be a crisis, let the Army make it!

Naturally half the Army said they were not anxious to do as they were required. But it was not altogether so. I was staying with a very great friend at the Curragh just after, commanding a brigade of that disciplined corps the Royal Artillery. He said, "I paraded my officers and certainly did not think of asking them their wishes. I gave my orders for the march to the North, and then packed my whatnots, as did the rest of my brigade." But he was of the other stock.

I often wonder if General Seely and Mr. Churchill ever offer little candles to the memory of William Hohenzollern for restoring the officer cadre of the British Army and Navy for them, even though it died in the process.

DER TAG

There were very busy days in Whitehall during the falling away of the world of peace. The first day of Mobilization was the Monday, but there is no time worse for such a crisis than the training season, especially the week when the Territorials are so much in camp. We were longing for Mr. Asquith to order the troops to their peace stations. "To your tents, O Israel," for they must get to them before they could mobilize and draw their mobilization equipment, while trains required for concentration would have to be diverted for their return. The horses were mostly within hail of the peace stations, but the training season for Territorials meant that many artillery and riding

types were far away from their census, and therefore impressment, areas. It took time to get this point into Mr. Asquith's head, especially as he feared that any move would precipitate the crisis. To the great joy of the Remount and Mobilization Directorates orders were issued to go home on the Saturday. On Friday an individual from the Finance Branch, a little harassed, put his nose into my room, and asked how much money we wanted for horse impressment. I said, "What we told you in the spring. Seven millions." So he went away looking sad, for he had much wealth. A little later he appeared: "The Financial Secretary's compliments, would not six and a half millions do?" I graciously agreed with the haggler that it might be enough to go on with, and added that we only wanted it by halves, the second half at the end of the first week. That cheered him.

On the Friday I had come up from Cheam to live in my room at the War Office, as I saw we would be overwhelmed with work. With me I brought a suit-case of uniform and another of flannels for the Broads, where I had a wherry for the next week, if it did not come to war.

On Friday we obtained leave to appoint our purchasers. This gave us a chance. All over the country the Commands sent the D.A.D.R.'s round to them issuing the boxes and explaining their contents.

There was a regular printed Bradshaw issued, containing the programmes and timing of horse trains and a schedule of horse boxes, especially those required for Aldershot, where I think 20,000 horses were to go.

All Sunday I was in the office, and looking out at the great Peace Meeting called in Trafalgar Square. A frightened sister looked in, to know what it all meant. One could only say Woe, woe, but we are ready, and it was a case of "If you don't help us, don't help the bar." About 3.30 p.m. there came

down the hardest thunder shower I've ever seen outside the tropics. Mr. Cunninghame Graham and all the speakers got the sign from Heaven that, alas! it was too late to talk of peace. The square was as empty in ten minutes as at dawn.

And all that long summer evening there was a remarkable and invigorating sight in Whitehall. The London Territorials had been due to leave Waterloo for Salisbury Plain in many train-loads that day, and the orders cancelling the move had not reached them before they mustered. Now they were coming back in their thousands and a soldierly sight they looked, regulars in appearance to the casual observer, and no mean imitation to the trained eye. The artillery were dragging their guns by hand, for the horses were away on the Plain. Whitehall, cool and clean after the storm, glistened and preened itself to see its soldiery.

Next morning it will be remembered was Bank Holiday, but all the excursion trains were cancelled. To this day I think of the dismay of those whose ends meet from Bank Holiday takings. For all the Bank Holiday boys and girls were thrown back on the London Streets, in their white skirts and their coloured sports coats and all the particular holiday bravery of '14. They formed long lines and marched throughout the day, arm-in-arm, singing up and down Parliament Street, or went off by thousands at a time to Buckingham Palace to cheer His Majesty or any visitor to the War Office of importance. That marvellous body of great enterprise, the London hawkers, and those who cater for them, rose to the occasion. Enamelled buttons with the portraits of the King and Queen and British and French flags appeared. The Union Jack and Tricolour in paper on sticks, French *gendarmes'* cocked hats and plumes were in great demand and exactly what the holiday folk wanted. Pork pies were doing a hot thing and amid

the crowd was the constant throng of lines of mobilizing details crossing London and threading their way from one terminus to another, and Mr. Appenrodt pasted up on his restaurant windows: "We are British Subjects."

The fun with the impressment was soon to begin. General Birkbeck was unfortunately, to his great chagrin, taken ill. It was not a bad thing as it happened, as the work became so incessant and it was so difficult to keep one's finger on it that, had he been there, he would assuredly have driven us wild by merely wanting to know about things for which he was responsible, or shove an oar in. It was a new experience to everyone and it was a one man's job. Countless queries came in from the Commands and I gave the answer out of hand. There was not even time to let the registry do its work, and I started a rough system of my own with only a couple of clerks to file the incessant telegrams which poured in. They were all problems that could be answered, but if you referred them to anyone else there would have been a block.

Here, for instance, is a sample wire: "Lord Kitchener—If the impressment of horses is put in force in this city, Liverpool will starve. Lord Mayor."

This would of course be sent to me by Lord Kitchener's Secretary. Immediately I would scribble the answer with a carbon copy: "Lord Mayor, Liverpool. Lord Kitchener regrets impressment must go on, and trusts you will see to it that Liverpool does not starve."

About 2 a.m. one night my telephone bell rang. "Is that Remounts War Office?" "Yes." "We are So-and-so, Jobmasters. An Officer has just come in here, demanded half my horses and told me to take all my carriages out into the yard as Territorial artillery will be billeted here. What are we to do?"

" Give up the horses, pull your carriages out, pretend that you like it."

" Is that right ? "

" Yes."—Ring off.

There were many visitors. The Lord Mayor's coachman arrived to ask exemption for the state horses. We agreed graciously in view of the heartening that the Lord Mayor's recent visit to Belgium in 1914 was evidently responsible for! But of course his horses were not on the impressment list.

The Duke of Teck called to know how his brigade of " Tins," a post-mobilization extra, was to be horsed. Two-thirds of each corps would be reservists, the sort of hefty lads who stand outside cinema halls and the like. A bit of a poser. Stop! Impressment has not yet touched the expensive hunters of the wealthy. No time to touch the Commands. So Major Brinton, late of the Tins, is equipped with special authority to impress heavyweight hunters for Household Cavalry; they would not be likely to go over yet and they can condition the horses and sweat down their reservists.

One noble Lord commanding a Territorial brigade of artillery wired to Lord Kitchener:

" My brigade seems to have been left out of the horse impressment scheme."

Of course it had *not*, but the noble lord *more suo* had not read the instructions in his mobilization box. So I feel pretty sure I have created a Kitchener Legend in that family. For I pinned a buff slip to that telegram and sent it back. On it I wrote in blue pencil: " You seem to have lost your nerve ! "

But it was soon evident that the actual impressment was going with a precision that surpassed our wildest hopes. The purchasers were playing up admirably, and sending excellent horses, while right through the kingdom good temper and patriotism simplified our task. General Cowans, who really was anxious,

restrained himself admirably and was content with the bare report I gave him each morning to the effect that all impressments of the day before were up to schedule and all despatches duly made, and that the Aldershot troops were pleasantly surprised at the flow of horse, where "Clockie," otherwise Major MacLaughlin, late of the 5th Lancers, D.A.D.R. Aldershot Command, and the Artillery riding master were doing brilliantly.

It is not often given to a man to put the machine of his own creation to the test, and the "old B—— in the window" was delighted and most approving at the way I was handling the question, rubbing his hands together. "Go it, my boy! Go it! You're all right!" And that was praise beyond price.

General Allenby, Commanding the Cavalry Division, came in to compliment us on the working of the "Boarded out" system, saying that the "boarders" were rejoining in very good condition. And so it went on, and I was able to get my former subaltern, Tommy Bate of the 80th Battery at Saugor, now Captain Bate,¹ into the office, as through a fall he was too unfit to mobilize. He was a man of parts and invaluable as the New Army troubles began to develop.

At this time I achieved some little notoriety in clubs and places where they gossip, not for having been able to organize what had been said to be impossible, viz. the impressment and distribution of 140,000 horses in a fortnight, but because I was reported by "the old B—— in the window" to have said to a gentleman who came in to complain about the fourth day of mobilization that the Yeomanry watching the east coast had impressed his daughter's riding horse, "that he was d——d lucky not to find a Uhlan in his daughter's bed." Not a nice remark, but some-

¹ Brigadier-General T. R. F. Bate, later Director of Remounts in Mesopotamia.

what natural to a strained Staff officer who had been pulled out to see an unnecessary visitor.

THE WAR OFFICE AND WAR

The Irish crisis petered out with Sir John French and Mr. Secretary Seely leaving us. It is not good to lose your Chief of the General Staff on the eve of war, though in the peculiar case of the British he was to command the Expeditionary Force, so that an earlier change was all to the good had there been a successor available of suitable calibre. As it was, Sir Charles Douglas, who had been Adjutant-General, and who was at the time, it will be remembered, Inspector-General of the Forces, came into the office, merely to pass away under the strain in a few months' time.

Then we all settled down again, with a good many sore and angry consciences. And the good Mr. Asquith came to the Secretary of Stateship for War, as the best solution for the moment. The soldiers found him a man, in their sense of the word, whose orders were Yea, Yea! and Nay, Nay! so that we could get along with the insistent job.

And so it rang to evensong, when the torch lit up Europe, and Lord Haldane for the moment took over the reins and Lord Kitchener was pulled from his paquet boat as he returned to Egypt. I don't think the War Office welcomed his arrival. He knew nothing of the British military system, and had not the least understanding of how much water had run under the bridges of late years in making a first-class striking force and in making a second-line model thereon.

Lord Kitchener always had a desire to throw gravel into a good machine and see it grind and groan. The General Staff unfortunately, as I have dwelt on in the Dardanelles story, had planned to go *en bloc* on this jaunt to France, and their guiding hand to an

Empire at War was withdrawn. Lord K. did not realize that the Territorial Force was a complete force in being with all its ancillaries, with which even a fortnight's embodiment under war stimulus would work wonders. Therefore when he and the Cabinet lost their nerve, and apparently at his instigation kept back two divisions of the Expeditionary Force, Sir John French was deprived of one-third of his fighting force. "Old One O'Clock" would not have had such fun had there been six divisions to fight instead of four, a fifth being sent over during the retreat from Mons and the sixth for the Marne.

What was worse even than the leaving of the two divisions behind was the decision to bring one of them from Ireland right across all the railways carrying troops southwards, to take post in the eastern counties. How it was done without a complete breakdown of the embarkation has always been a mystery to those in the know. But it pleased Lord K. to have it so.

When his Lordship started the Kitchener Army, his personal interference tended to kill the recruiting by not allowing the Adjutant-General and Quarter-master-General to run their jobs. They and their staff understood them thoroughly, which he did not. Having got his policy, the detail was theirs. It was hot and wet in August. The recruiting was begun without a moment's notice. The G.O.C. Administration at Aldershot, General Hamilton Gordon, was wise enough to get Lyons to cater for the first rush of recruits, but that was not possible elsewhere. But because Lord K. would not listen to reason, thousands of men were turned out by blocks on to country commons long before the Commands responsible could by any human means get food, tents and sanitation going. It was well calculated to break the hearts of the recruits, who were marched away so gaily by town bands from the various recruiting offices.

The London recruiting offices especially were a pathetic and glorious sight. Pathetic and glorious because long before England had really woken up, the young men of the Empire had rallied. They had flung themselves with a Gladstone bag on to the nearest ship, from China and Malay, from Buenos Aires and the like, and I can see them still with their labelled bags coming in long queues.

At the War Office my master, Sir John Cowans, was always on his perch, and on his perch he remained despite petticoats and despite intrigues of all kinds, till the end. To have Quartermastered the British Empire through a four years' war is no mean feat, and it is sad that he should not have lived after to see more of that life of which he enjoyed every moment; for he was a young man when he retired and died.

I have often wondered as to the secret of his success. Men and women all loved him. Lord K. fed out of his hand. He never did any work if there was anyone who could do it for him, but he was competent and did and could do any or every job if there was no one else to do it. At Simla he rarely went to bed till the smaller hours were growing larger, and it was not till after lunch that he was at his best, but he did more work in two hours of the afternoon than most men in a day. He was extremely good at selecting men to work for him, and when he saw he could trust them letting them have their run with just as much support as they needed. He had plenty of the wisdom of the serpent, and in the good sense of the word was all things to all men—and women. Nine women out of ten loved him and to many he was irresistible. His way was simple enough, his chaff of the most uninstructed. Yet he knew exactly what they wanted and was the epitome of kindness and good nature.

I lived and worked for the first three months of the War in my room at Whitehall, just outside his.

About 8 p.m. in those early days a fairy would call for him with rustles and frills, and about 11 p.m. two would probably bring him back, tuck him up in his chair at his office table, kiss him on the brow and depart, and then perhaps I would go to him for two or three hours' work.

He did not like the French, and always declared fate had got us in the wrong box and that we belonged to the Teuton stock. In the early days letters came to him from the Princess Pless, which he would take to Lord K. The Princess was frightened and said we could never make headway against the German determination and Prussian grimness. K. would laugh and say, "Write to the girl again and get some more."

THE HORSEING OF THE NEW ARMY

Hardly had we completed the original forces when the policy was inaugurated of bringing back the Imperial troops from the outlying portions of the globe, Egypt, Africa and Mediterranean, India, etc., relieving them where necessary with Territorials. This gave five new regular divisions as first additions to the original Expeditionary Force, and we set to work to still further strip the kingdom of horses, only to find that the supply was greater even than we thought. Then on top of this came the new divisions, the first six of K.1. We had always held ready two Remount Commissions, one for Canada and one for the United States. It was evident that the States were prepared to supply any and all belligerents, and we opened out large establishments in the States as well as Canada. The Canadian horse supply was not so very large, and as Canada began to get busy on her own account we transferred our attentions to the States. Major-General Benson, at one time Director of Remounts and himself a Canadian, was our principal representative on the Atlantic side to commence with.

Brickbat had recovered, and his organizing powers were much needed and well exercised. He selected Avonmouth and Ormskirk (lent by Lord Derby) as big reception depots for imports from North America, and our organization of Remount Squadrons was at once expanded. Each station was to have four squadrons to be augmented later, while at Swaythling near Southampton was opened a large remount depot at which trained and fit horses could be collected for despatch to France.

The question of chargers for the innumerable officers of the new armies was of course very urgent. The method adopted to commence with was the taking on of the various riding schools in the big towns to train and handle them. The old gin-fed grooms of the towns had no value in the ranks but were invaluable in their own game. In London a very large business was thus started. Then we had an inspiration. We made Tattersalls the issuing depot for chargers for the higher staff. Officers of high rank coming home from abroad with their staff or those from the retired list appointed to New Army commands would blow in to see us with the remark, "I suppose there is no chance of a decent horse?" The answer was, "Certainly, go down to Tatts and see if there is anything you fancy." It was a kindly and effective piece of flat-catching. General officers of extreme ferocity would go away quite mollified and would take contentedly what the remount officers would give them. Major Elwys, late R.H.A., had all the London riding schools full of horses being handled, and every day or so he or one of his assistants would go round and order to Tatts any horses fit to issue.

We soon realized that the demand for the new artillery would be more than the light van horse population of the world would supply. Brickbat and I had many anxious talks on the subject, and I said I thought that

the large mule, which was already coming from Spain by smuggling to Bayonne, would do in type. His knowledge of the mules in New Orleans sugar plantations suggested that these were even better. We knew that there was a tendency to get rid of mules and go to motor trolly ways; and a telegram to Benson started this supply off. Magnificent mules began to come. We issued a circular to the New Army artillery that mules or horses would be issued without distinction as might be. Some of the brigadiers of artillery from the retired list were angry enough, and a ferocious letter of protest came in from John Hotham, a horse artilleryman *sans peur et sans reproche*. Whereupon I sent him a double dose. We also persuaded Peck, who was re-forming L Battery R.H.A. at the Wood, to have a horse artillery team of mules to show visitors, and we promised that if he played up, he should pick the horses for his battery for himself. We also had a coach and four of mules driven daily in the Park, and the conscientious objector was sent up to the 'Wood' to see the team or to see the coaching. They soon found that, not only did the big mules, 15·2 and more, repay attention, and that they were the most delightful friends, but that they carried fine condition and clipped out like silk. John Hotham even made a cult of them, so *that* trouble was over, and the mules and horse poured over from America by the thousand.

When a new formation was first started we sent it a batch of all the funny peaceable old skins that had been discarded from units going overseas, for training purposes, and as they improved, sent better animals. Then when the order arrived to get the formation ready for abroad, Captain Hambro, late R.A., also a disabled officer, with one or two myrmidons, descended on the formation, took on some stableyard handy as a depot, sent off all the unfit and unsound horses to another new formation and demanded on the War

Office the balance to complete. It was a most efficient system and division after division was completed in this way.

That in brief is the story of the mounting of the Army for the first nine months of the War, by which time the system was thoroughly established, though destined of course to be modified as times changed and the War rolled on. It is worth recording, for we shall never see quite the same occasion or effort again.

Just before the War I had accepted an appointment as G.S.O.1. of S.D.2 at Army Headquarters in India, and was to have gone out in the autumn of 1914. Shortly after the commencement of War, I found myself a Brevet-Colonel for my work in horse mobilization, and thus had now had brevets of Major, Lieut.-Colonel and Colonel, and Jade Fortune was certainly giving to me with both hands and in no fickle way. Shortly after the commencement of the War, I found myself a regimental Lieut.-Colonel also, owing to the large increase of our Corps, an increase which ruined many eventually, by stranding them at the end of a Lieut.-Colonel's command far too young to get a full pension.

By July '15, when I seemed to be glued to my War Office chair for ever, Jack Cowans sent for me. "You are to go out with Altham at once to the Dardanelles, they've got themselves into a hell of a mess. I shan't forget what you've done here, and you'll soon get your chance there." What a good Chief for a man to serve!

CHAPTER VIII

THE DARDANELLES

THE ILL-WINDED CONCEPTION

THE story, the epic, the glory and the tragedy of the Dardanelles has been told often enough, and however much the statesmen involved and concerned may engage in controversy, or may try to justify their share, the Army in general is quite convinced that it was the most damnable folly that ever amateurs were enticed into. It is quite certain that had there been a General Staff in being at the War Office in the proper sense of the word, the expedition to the Dardanelles would never have been undertaken at all, or would have been undertaken in a very different manner. The cardinal fact that the General Staff jaunted to France and left no one to control the affairs of an Empire at War will be ever remembered. That fact has been very bitterly referred to in Mr. Ashmead Bartlett's unpleasant but sadly accurate *Uncensored Dardanelles*, and there is no doubt that but for it the folly of the Dardanelles in the actual form the expedition took could not have taken place. When the able officers from the retired list, who mostly came to form a General Staff, had taken hold, the real grip had been lost. The Secretary of State for War was controlling too much, and plans were not being properly considered. The General Staff at this time was not a machine of prestige, and it did not influence counsel duly. All his life Lord Kitchener had hated working through established machinery, and would rather use

any tool to his hand than the one designed for any express purpose. The Lord Kitcheners of the world are *sui generis*.

I do not propose to try and tell the story, or sing the epic, and I can but tell that part of it with which I was personally cognizant, the attempt to build up a system of communications too late and the planning and carrying out of the evacuation.

It may be said without fear of contradiction that Mr. Winston Churchill's conception was magnificent. The Baltic was closed, Russia was isolated save by way of Vladivostock, or the occasional door of Archangel. Could we open the way to the Black Sea, Russian assistance would have been effective to the Allies, and it is now evident that the Russian Revolution in its horrible form of Bolshevism would not have come about. But it is one thing to have a magnificent conception and quite another to carry it out, as shareholders know to their cost.

The final verdict of history will probably be that had the conception been worth turning into fact, far more of the resources of the Allies should have been devoted to it, and some of the best brains in the Services put on to produce a business-like plan of action. When the scheme was being formed, some brain of the disconcerting type was needed which would constantly have queried the next step. Some brain which would have asked "*Alors ?*" and again "*Et alors ?*" as each step was pronounced feasible.

"Secure the Dardanelles, yes! What next?"
 "Clear the Narrows of minefields! What next?"
 "Take your battle fleet through! What next?"
 "How will you get transport through without holding the Asiatic shore?" "Where will you land next?"
 "Where is your field army?" For the masses of untried men without guns and field equipment which

formed the bulk of the forces flung hotch-potch into the cauldron were not a field army.

Mr. Churchill's great card was of course a magnificent obsolescent fleet, the fleet to which nothing in the Mediterranean, indeed nothing but the bottled-up German fleet, could be superior, but which might be lost for a good cause without prejudicing our real naval strength. Never perhaps has a nation been in such a position! A magnificent fleet, magnificently manned, that could be spared, and manned too by hearts of oak only too content to be squandered in a good cause.

History will perhaps say that the Cabinet, having come to its decision, should have insisted on the better implementing of the decision by Army as well as Navy. But the sequence of events is worth remembering. The bombardment of the forts at the mouth of the Dardanelles by the fleet on the 18th March presumably denotes that in the brain of someone the fleet was expected to get through and do the trick alone, followed by transports bringing the Royal Naval Division to hold what was gained, and possibly some Australians. *Et alors?* Then we must note how things went by stages towards the grim *débâcle*.

The fleet having failed with heavy loss, as presumably was not expected, the Army was called in, but not to a calculated operation, with the steps to be faced and expected duly tabulated, but merely as a contribution by Lord Kitchener who gave a small parcel of the best he had.

The 29th Division which went from the United Kingdom was the very finest formation that had ever left the British Isles, and Lord Kitchener indeed gave of his best. But it was given in exactly the same spirit as conceived the original despatch of the Expeditionary Force, merely a contribution to a worthy cause.

The 29th Division, supplemented by some of the Australian troops training in Egypt, was the Army's contribution. The Australians at that stage were hardly ready to be the principal prop to a difficult operation.

THE 29TH DIVISION

To understand the super-excellence of the 29th Division it is necessary to remember the composition of the Standing Regular Army of Great Britain. Half this Army and more serves abroad, and that left in England was and is still to some extent the "squeezed lemons" of Lord Wolseley's phrase. This portion of the Army sufficed with the cutting and trimming of Lord Haldane's time to find an Expeditionary Force of six divisions and a cavalry division with the Army troops adjudged necessary—no more and no less. Lord Kitchener, whose leading gift was flair, flair even more than vision, brought Home all our overseas troops except that portion of the British Garrison of India which was needed for the Indian Field Army. The garrisons of Egypt, of South Africa, of the Mediterranean and the Crown Colonies sailed to the sound of the cannon, and out of them five more Expeditionary Force divisions were formed of even better material than the first six, with here and there a dodge ment to fill in details. But whereas the squeezed lemons had been brought to war establishment with reservists, after eliminating for the time being the youngest soldiers, and were therefore so much below efficiency as the presence of 50 per cent. of reservists might stand for,¹ these five divisions were entirely composed of serving soldiers in the prime of their youth, and were, so far as *personnel* went, the finest we had ever seen in our history, only lacking to some extent the coherent finish of an Aldershot or Salisbury Plain training season.

¹ Surprisingly little, all things considered.

The constituent units of the 7th and 8th Divisions were the first Home.¹ They assembled and mobilized during the autumn and were soon sent to France. The troops from further afield did not arrive till later, and were to form the 27th, 28th and 29th Divisions. Despite the prayers of the Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General, Lord Kitchener insisted on putting the 27th and 28th into camp also, on the downs at Winchester in the winter. Thereby efficiency was much retarded and horses and men suffered severely, the latter coming from hot climes, both going sick in large numbers from exposure. During their assembly and mobilization period it would have been quite feasible to have billeted both men and horses. The results of his obduracy being so patent, his Lordship had to give way to those who understood the business, and the brigades and units last to arrive, those of the 29th Division, were billeted about Coventry and Rugby and the neighbourhood.

He was well repaid. The division was complete at the end of March, and at the top of its form. The men had time to get acclimatized to their return, and it was well fitted for any desperate enterprise, which required more intense and individual training than even the reservist-fed divisions, of the Expeditionary Force, let alone the young stuff of the "New Model," could attain to. Lord Kitchener then, in giving the 29th Division, gave the best grant-in-aid in his power, but it was only intended as a "grant-in-aid." That this was so, was very forcibly borne in on me when I accompanied my master, the Q.M.G., to interview Lord Kitchener himself. The moment the Division had sailed, the Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General were concerned with forwarding the reinforcements in men and animals and the replacements in

¹ Divisions 9 to 14 were, it will be remembered, K.1 and the next twelve K.2 and K.3.

equipments which are necessary to keep a formation in being in the field. Lord Kitchener at that time would not hear of it. "If they are successful, they won't want it," he said. "If they fail, they shan't have it."

THE DESCENSUS AVERNI

Before dealing with the Suvla Bay landing, to cope with which was one of my first tasks in the Dardanelles, an outline of the tragic *descensus Averni* must be given. There are some useful lessons in that which people desire to shirk. Sir John Cowans urged that proper arrangements for a base and a line of communications should be made. He saw that the administrative problem would grow very great, that we had no idea whither we were leading, that we should get involved with a host of small craft for administrative and non-combatant purposes and that the Navy, by nature of itself, was quite unqualified to deal with what was a commercial proposition. The Army, he said, must have a businesslike equipment to deal with transports, store-ships, tugs, lighters, and wharves. But no one would listen, and the most that could be done was to equip a small base staff under Brigadier-General McGrigor, "Pig" of the 60th, then General Officer in charge of Administration at Chester, a man with some knowledge but not always "easy."

Sir John, in view of the extraordinary difficulties he saw ahead, and which to his despair no one would face, was anxious that a strong and modern Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster-General should be posted to G.H.Q. Sir Ian Hamilton, however, pressed to be allowed to take with him a retired officer of the Army Service Corps, who had served him so well in a similar capacity at the Eastern Command and Horse Guards during the earlier days of the War. Sir John Cowans, while appreciating the services of the officer con-

cerned, knew that he could not understand the "Q" work or position of the new regime and the unusual conditions that he would have to face. Lord Kitchener, who had a fine disregard for personalities and to whom all Staff work was a sealed book, felt, and felt with some reason, that a Commander must, if possible, choose his own higher Staff, and it was left at that.

THE NAVAL ATTACKS

It is perhaps not generally realized that the Navy was bombarding the Dardanelles so early as the third week in February, and the Royal Naval Division, the original "War Babies" of Crystal Palace birth, a division to come to great fame, was assembling at the "Lonely Lemnos" of the poet. General Birdwood in Egypt was warned that 30,000 of his Australians might be required to support the Navy, and on the 2nd March a brigade of Australians actually sailed for Mudros Harbour in the island of Lemnos. To this harbour, too, the 29th Division was being despatched. Sir John Maxwell from Egypt reported that Mudros Harbour had none of the conveniences a modern force needed, and that he could make Alexandria available as a base. On the 18th March the great Naval attack on the entrance to the Dardanelles took place. The old but powerful masonry forts at the entrance, armed with freak guns which the ordnance firms had sold to the Turks in earlier days, were destroyed. But the outer fringe of the entrance only could be reached, the inner forts and the mine-fields were not to be passed, and one French and two British battleships were sunk and two more British vessels seriously damaged. Sir Ian Hamilton having now arrived, discovered for himself that Mudros was not a propitious place for a base, and that while Mudros Harbour itself was a very suitable place for a mere rendezvous, the

problem was now much more than a question of assembling transports that should follow the victorious fleet through the Dardanelles. He had arrived in time to see the *finale* of the Naval bombardment and its disasters, and formed the opinion, which he duly reported, that nothing but a landing of troops could capture the Straits.

LEMNOS AND MUDROS

On the island of "Lonely Lemnos" is a magnificent natural harbour—magnificent, that is to say, so far as room and safe anchorage went. Surrounded on the north and west by mountains, it lay open to winds on other sides, as the transports were to discover later. The harbour and small town of Mudros, in which probably the Achæan fleets had wintered in the days of the siege of Troy on the mainland opposite, was entered by a narrow entrance easily blocked by nets and defended with a Greek redoubt. By a useful concatenation of circumstances it was possible for the Allies to occupy this island of neutral Greece, because though in Greek occupation since the last Græco-Turkish War, Turkey had never accepted the settlement and denied that it was a Greek possession, despite the fact of a Greek fort, and the destruction of the mosques by the Christian portion of the population.

The handing over of the fort and therefore occupation of territory claimed by Turkey as hers obviously did not infringe any form of neutrality. But had the General Staff at the War Office been on their perch, they would have consulted fully the military *attachés* who had been in Turkey and Greece, and they would have discovered three things.

First, that the defence of the Dardanelles was the stock exercise of the Turkish Staff College under their German instructors and probably also of the Navy under their British instructors.

Second, that the Greek General Staff had equally freely studied the ways of attacking the Dardanelles and saw little light.

Third, they would have known before starting how unsuitable without development the harbour was for a military purpose.

Sir Ian Hamilton, realizing the truth of Sir John Maxwell's messages, decided to move the troops to the Egyptian bases, and from these to re-arrange the divisions for a landing in the face of the enemy, as the troops had naturally been embarked under long-voyage conditions. There is another point that may here be dwelt on with advantage. The Navy had insisted on embarking the vehicles and material of the 29th Division. The result was chaos unimaginable. The people to embark the vehicles of stores of the artillery, signals, infantry, transport, etc., must be the troops themselves, under stevedore supervision. The cheery sling-'em-on methods of the Navy had resulted in a jigsaw puzzle, which only the spacious quays of Alexandria or Port Said would bring to solution. I speak feelingly in this matter, for I suffered from the same disconcerting helpfulness at Chatham when embarking my ammunition column for the South African War, and only half-way through, by a near approach to a pitched battle, could I get leave to finish it myself. Complicated stores must be packed by the users. Dick Wortley's acumen was here at fault, for if I remember right, he embarked personnel at one port and stores and carriages at another. A sufficiency of personnel to embark one's own stores is essential at any inconvenience rather than let the cheery ones handle them.

THE HISTORIC LANDINGS

To Egypt, then, came the troops of the force which were now to be known as the Mediterranean Expedi-

tionary Force, and proceeded to re-arrange themselves on the spacious Egyptian quays. They were the Royal Naval Division, the 29th Division, and the French under General D'Amade, principally an African contingent. As it was only now possible to decide on the rôle in which the force was to be employed, viz. in landing on what was a mixture of Beachy Head and Pevensey Bay coast, with a mountain hinterland immediately behind, the major portion of all animals and vehicles, with attendants, officers, horse, etc., would have to remain in Egypt, and this produced an exceedingly complex problem. Brigadier-General McGrigor duly opened the Base of the Force at Alexandria, in the house of the G.O.C.-in-Chief in Egypt, and naturally under his general administration, but also under the command of Sir Ian Hamilton. The details included not only this host of animals, which grew and grew to enormous dimensions, but the details of the Australians already in Egypt and about to go to the Peninsula and who were soon to increase.

Now it is obvious that Egypt was the only possible base in the first instance, though a little harder thinking would soon have recognized the difficulties which were to arise and which would imperatively demand the development of Mudros. Already these difficulties against which the Q.M.G. at the War Office had wished to provide were rearing their heads.

However, with very remarkable promptitude the force was disembarked, allowed to stretch its legs, re-arranged for an immediate landing in the face of the enemy, and able to start re-embarking by the 4th April, and get away to its various concealed and secret rendezvous.

Sir Ian Hamilton had reported, after his first reconnaissance from the decks of the flagship during the bombardment, that in his opinion only by a landing could the Straits be seized. But he had not realized,

in spite of the fact that he alone had any experience of *grande guerre* and had personal knowledge of the capture of the fortress of Port Arthur, that the Dardanelles was a fortress only to be taken by means adequate to the capture of fortresses.

As failure after failure attended their efforts, the force as a whole soon became extremely critical of their Chief and most hostile to their own Headquarters, and I myself have long felt that harder thinking and a stronger line taken by Sir Ian would have prevented the venture taking place.

But I have quite recently steamed quietly to and fro in the Dardanelles, going close under the ruins of the bombarded forts and the famous beaches of Cape Helles, at about the same time of year as that of the bombardment. Looking at the young green on the hill-sides, and the same spring flowers amid which the 29th Division died, I could not but believe that as it looked in the spring of 1928 so it looked in the spring of 1915 to Sir Ian. Even had he had adequate aeroplane reconnaissance—which he had not—the whole appearance must have conveyed the idea that with the fine troops and the staff he had, it was just a possible proposition.

Is there one man among ten thousand, among trained soldiers, given the knowledge and experience of 1914, unballasted by the living lessons of France, who would have told his Government that the task he was sent out to do was impossible, or too unpromising to attempt? It is certain that it would have meant that some one else would have been sent, not to report further, *but to try the hazard*. But hazard though it was, I now think that it must have *looked* a soluble problem.

Perhaps, then, we may regard it from a different angle, and without going deep into those details which only the official history can do, ask ourselves why the

attack on Cape Helles failed. It will be hard to avoid feeling that a little more pep left in the bottle the day after the landing would have at any rate captured Kritia and Achi Baba, which at that time probably meant the Narrows. The failure either meant that losses had been far heavier than anticipated, or that the thinking had not been quite hard enough. We may leave it at that.

At Anzac Cove an equally glorious and desperate struggle had resulted in such a Pyrrhic victory that General Birdwood demanded to be re-embarked, and when this was refused as impossible, the young Anzac troops, their leaders taking heart of grace, extricated themselves, by sheer grit and élan, from their weary broken state, drove back fierce counter-attacks and consolidated their grim position on the edge of a Beachy Head.

In the attempts to improve the position, more and more troops were brought up from Egypt, the 42nd Division, the 52nd Division, the 29th Indian Brigade and reinforcements, so that the original 29th Division and the Australians were to some extent restored. Then recommenced those series of general open attacks on the pre-war tactical model which have been so criticized, and which produced such heavy losses without a practical gain of ground. In vain did the French bring their African troops and Territorial Zouaves over from the Asiatic shore where they had successfully landed, to take over a portion of the British line, in vain did they and the 29th again expend themselves, in vain did the 42nd, the 52nd and the Naval Division tear their guts out. Progress was not to be won.

I am not competent to criticize these operations, only to admire the devotion of the troops, but it is well to realize that none of the divisions, either at this stage or later, had anything like their comple-

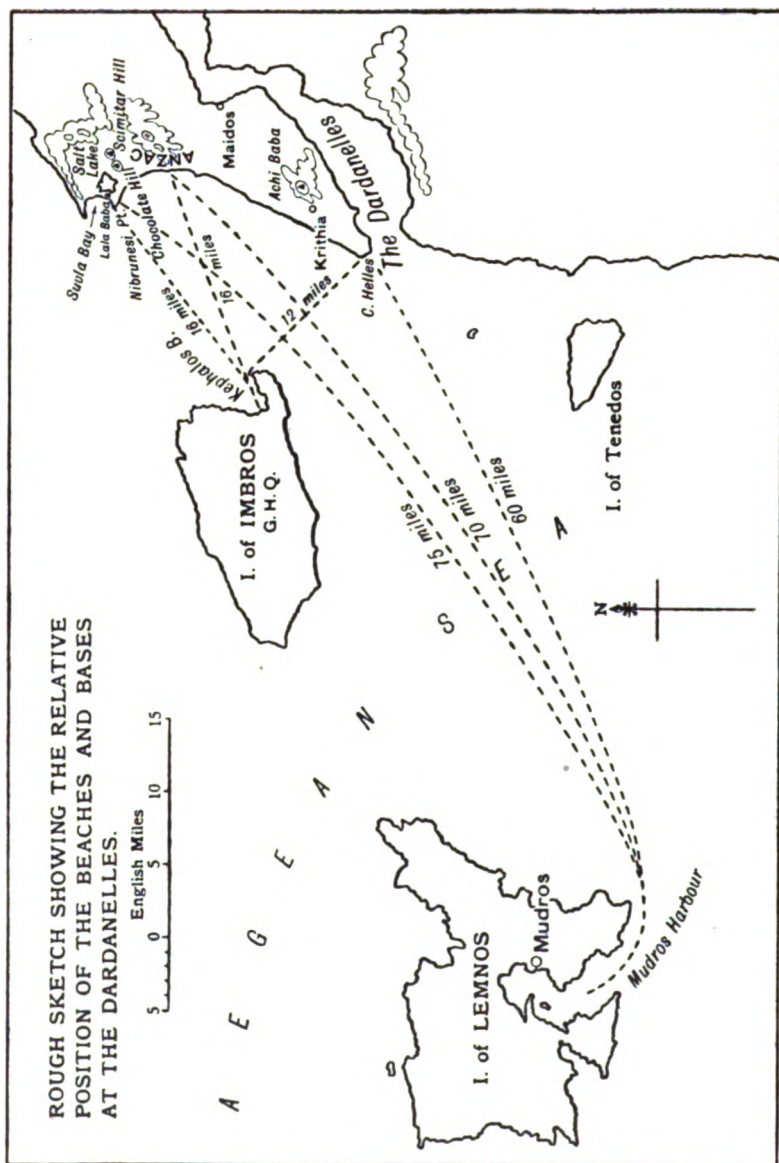
ment of artillery on shore. In fact, it was not available even could it have been landed and could it have found a place to deploy. The great powerful guns of the warships were looked to to more than counteract this defect. And before any attack, broadside after broadside from the fleet seemed to blow the whole Peninsula sky high in one magnificent scene of hell let loose. To those who knew, as some of the artillery did, that high-velocity armour-piercing guns, fired especially from a lower terreplein than the objective, is as much use as a sick headache, the disappointment that was to ensue on the small results came as no surprise. We had seen it before in South Africa, we knew that the methods of sea gunnery are not those of land gunnery; that control of fire from ships on a land objective in close co-operation with troops is most difficult with all the will in the world.

We from South Africa have also heard the tale, indignantly refuted by the sailors, in Gallipoli as at Spion Kop, that they had fired on friend and foe, which was so rife after the failure of the Anzac attack on Kilid Bahir on August 6th.

I should be sorry to repeat the tale, but I may remark that shooting on your own men is no easy thing to avoid, until the control and switch of fire was brought to the fine art that it became later on in France, where incidentally it was held that it was better to lose a few men from your own fire than to lose many from the enemy's through a premature lifting of the barrage. That famous old French artilleryman, General Langlois, used to say, "Ah! when I see *les pantalons rouges*, then I know where my own men are."

Whatever be the causes, the fact remains that pour in their new troops never so freely, attack G.H.Q. never so repeatedly, the amount of ground gained was trivial. Never were the troops able to be withdrawn from the firing line, or at any rate from fire. The

ROUGH SKETCH SHOWING THE RELATIVE
POSITION OF THE BEACHES AND BASES
AT THE DARDANELLES.



Turkish guns swept every beach, and never for a moment could stores or men be landed without being swept with such shell-fire as the Turks might choose or their shell supply permit them to use. The troops at Helles and Anzac were hanging on by their eyelids, sick at heart, angry, bitter, and like all Anglo-Saxons when unsuccessful, and at that time none too well fed, were grumbling heartily. In addition to that they were almost all young troops and young officers, and they did not like it at all.

THE COMMUNICATIONS

At this stage we may suitably consider the problem of the communications, a neglected problem which was in itself a scandal and had a considerable influence in making the landings of so little avail.

I have described how very properly Sir Ian had recognized that Mudros Harbour was quite impossible for the immediate base at which to face the landings. But a little harder thinking should have shown that Alexandria could not serve the purpose for long. The stores of all kinds were being loaded in great store-ships, 7,000 to 10,000 tons, and were being despatched to the "beaches," packed either for a special beach or else part for one and part for another. Now if this situation was to endure, and if it was certain that ocean ships could remain off the beach with safety, just outside shell range, then such an arrangement was only feasible if those ships could be lightly laden with a clear plan of the holds and could remain at anchor as floating store-ships, from which stores as required could be found and landed. For we were at a Pevensey Bay with no sign of harbour or jetty, except the baby things of spars run up by sailors and sappers for boats to run into. There was nothing at which the thousands of tons required by an army could be landed, or arranged. There were no places out of shell-fire to

make ordnance depots. Further, it was soon found that as soon as some little piers had been erected, there would come a gale, even in those summer months, a sou'-wester or something suitable of that sort, and everything would be washed away. Helles Beach forsooth was a pretty advanced base for four divisions!

Then happened what everyone except the High Command knew would happen. Store-ships and battleships, hospital ships, and all sorts of craft lay lazily off the beaches, and the derricks of the store-ships rose and fell steadily, day in day out, while the flotilla, the very inadequate flotilla of small craft, plied between ship and shore. Then came rumour of submarines. Some cheery sailor had remarked one night that if anyone cared to see battleships sunk it would be well to be up early in the morning. Whether it was well or whether it was ill, it was so. Next morning three battleships went to their graves in the Ægean, and all great craft pulled up their anchors in dismay and made, hell for leather, for the protection of Mudros Harbour. Now Mudros was 60 miles away from the beaches. The problem then became how to land men and stores. No longer was Alexandria a suitable base. Yet weeks had been lost in which something might have been done at Mudros. But nobody had the faintest conception of what to do, the Navy least of all.

Here we were with dozens of great store-ships lying at anchor for whose return England was shouting. But we had no wharves, we could not get them near the shore in Mudros Harbour even, we had not enough lighters or tugs or labour to handle them. The first steps taken were to obtain small freighters of about 500 tons, known in the jargon of the Ægean as "G" ships, and load them with stores of all kinds by putting them alongside the ships in Mudros Harbour. But even here from a ship's hold it was almost impossible

to fill those ships to fit with any special demand. Stores must come out of the holds as fast as they could be got in, in the order that they had been loaded. Rummaging was an impossibility. The only method was to get what you could to the beaches and arrange the stores on those shell-swept shores as best you could.

The want of foresight was now hopelessly apparent. Enough "G" ships could not be obtained to use the Alexandrian base, which, while three or four days away for the large ships, was far more for the slower little ones. Had there been dozens of little ships, they could have been filled to order at Alexandria, but there were only enough available to do the short round trip to Mudros. Therefore to Mudros the store-ships had to come, and it seemed better to send many of the ships out to Mudros direct from Home.

But Lord Kitchener had refused to send the force any L. of C. organization. There was a Director of Works with the force, but there was no one who could or would direct his energies or give him a policy of construction. The result of all this was that the force on shore could not for a long time be properly supplied, though the Army Service Corps had, almost on their own, done wonders so far as wonders were possible.

The prolonged struggle on the Peninsula had produced many issues and there were half-baked camps, depots and hospitals huddled on shore at Mudros without any camp commandants, provosts or provost-marshals or staff to keep things straight. At last Lord Kitchener had sent there an elderly Indian General, Major-General Wallace, from the Indian retired list, a man much incapacitated by a bad wound incurred in the defence of Chilas years before, with no knowledge and experience of administration or logistics. He had commanded for a while one of the New Army divisions, but his wound had prevented him remaining.

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He had no Headquarters or personnel to help him, and the problem wanted some one with quite a different experience to that of his Frontier life.

Into this wild confusion, this helpless state of affairs at Mudros, Sir Edward Altham and I found ourselves pitched two or three weeks before the Suvla Bay landing. We were welcomed by General Wallace, whom Sir Edward was to relieve. The poor dear was walking about with his pockets stuffed with pink telegrams, which he did not know what to do with. Fortunately he had with him a Royal Marine officer, Lieut.-Colonel Armstrong, a first-class Staff officer and graduate of Camberley, who would have put up a decent show had he been given time and material, and he happily remained with us. But victory is not by will alone, and he had not had enough resources to cope with the multitude of conflicting instructions and demands now pouring in from many sources, which had driven poor Wallace so wild.

Sir Edward Altham hurried off to G.H.Q. on the island of Imbros, while I set to work to help Armstrong and to collect staff and commandants, etc. It was horribly hot, the Ægean at its worst, myriads of flies everywhere, and I went on shore at once, managed to get a horse, and rode round such camps as there were. The little town of Mudros was a disgraceful sight, crowded with British and Anzac details, apparently void of all discipline. The men were strolling in the town, stark naked except for a pair of shorts, and disreputable to a degree. To my chagrin there were plenty of French details about who looked the reverse. Everything French was orderly and organized. Neat little jetties had been made, neat little huts erected, the men sitting happily drinking *vin ordinaire* at their own camps, unloading going on neatly. In our own lines, indiscipline, dirt and beastliness. The first thing was to read the Riot Act, get some strong com-

mandants from somewhere, and set them to work. Dysentery and enteric were with us, and worse disease would obviously be upon us if this sort of thing went on.

However, troops, even disorderly troops, will answer to the helm, especially if they see that their own advantage is to follow at once, and we soon got the place cleaned up. Then to tackle the harbour problem. Sir Edward had come back with a certain amount of definite instructions. The Directors of Supplies and Ordnance were to come up at once from Alexandria. Sir John Maxwell, with his usual grip of affairs, sent up his largest contractor with a competent engineer officer to try and make the ocean piers and jetties we so badly needed in the harbour. The High Command elected to return them, so that no attempt to improve our position could be started. No doubt it seemed to them late to try and set matters right. But had they begun, even then, what should have been started a couple of months before, they would have gained much before the campaign was over, and it is to be remembered that the fleet and some troops occupied the harbour for the rest of the War.

Sir Edward at once realized that, despite the cry for the return of ships, it was impossible to unload on to the shore. He decided that he must retain a very large store-ship with ample deck space as a floating supply depot, and another as ordnance depot. Into the former were put Turkish prisoners as labourers, who worked happily enough for their ample rations and who could not escape. On the spacious decks of those two large steamers it was possible to form a base supply depot and to get the ordnance stores, especially the important essential of spare parts, laid out in proper order. The Naval Commander-in-Chief under whose orders the store-ships still were, had perforce to acquiesce in the retention of these

ships, storm the Naval Transport Department at the Admiralty never so fiercely.

One more ship had to be retained, indeed had been retained from the first. That was the *Arragon*, a Royal Mail liner. In default of landing facilities, and any sort of accommodation to make an administrative Headquarters, she was retained as floating offices. It has pleased the Army to speak of the *Arragon* as a sink of iniquity, and to say that she rested on a bank of empty beer bottles. It is such a good and popular impression that it is a pity to dispel it. At the stage when we arrived the submarine held sway and the *Arragon* was an absolute essential to the force. Not only was she the residence and office of the Inspector-General of Communications and his Staff, and the Commodore in charge of small craft working the supply system, and the Senior Naval Transport Officer, but she afforded quarters to innumerable departmental officers. Her saloons were their administrative offices. It would have been impossible to carry on the work without her.

But she fulfilled an even more essential rôle. She was the Clapham Junction for the Beaches. She had three tiers of troop decks and these were organized as rest camps with personnel in charge. Every day details from the shore camps or from the various newly arrived transports were collected, sorted out for the three separate beaches, received their last meal and a short-voyage ration. Every evening from five o'clock onwards, so as to cross in the darkness, came the carriers, the Margate and Isle of Man packet boats. Alongside the *Arragon* it was possible to load them expeditiously and with the details properly sorted and properly fed. She fulfilled a want that could have been met in no other way. Especially was she invaluable in collecting and sorting out the various officers who poured out to join units and staffs.

Her saloons were crowded with clerks and staff, who in great heat had the solace that a meal and something to drink could still be obtained from the ship's saloon. It was this probably that annoyed the Army. In the intense dreariness in the rest camps on shore in which the call to the beaches was awaited, for it was poisonously hot everywhere, officers off duty used to wait about for any craft coming to the *Arragon*, and there hang about blocking the gangways, reading the news and endeavouring to get refreshments from the bar, and thus waited for hours for a chance to return. It was essential to stop that if work was to go on. And no doubt the Army was angered. If you are doing your own work in misery, it is annoying that others are slightly better off. It was of course the same in France, where the fact that Headquarters were in *châteaux* was always a grievance to those in the trenches, despite the fact that paper work could only be done under cover. That is the simple story of that very hardworked staff on the *Arragon*. In addition it was possible to give meals to officers and men transferring from transports who would otherwise have hung about unfed and unrested for hours and sometimes days. In fact, as a combined Clapham Junction, Y.M.C.A. and A.B.C., it was the most important item in the routine of the communications.

Affairs on that floating depot were soon got into good order between decks and we had a guard of a Garrison Regiment put on board to compete with the many French generals and admirals as well as our own, who often came on board. From them was furnished a permanent saluting guard of well-turned-out be-medalled old soldiers to do justice to their dignities. The French Naval Commander-in-Chief was very fond of coming on board, and visiting General Altham. The *Arragon* was a ship which normally carried wealthy Argentines, and her *cabins de luxe* were good.

Sir Edward had one of these, which was decorated with cupids and no doubt was intended for the honeymoon trip of the unco' *riche*. Admiral Guepratte was always delighted to chaff my Chief at "*les petits amours*" which surrounded his respectable bed.

THE HARBOUR

Among the distinguished Naval officers with whom we came in contact was Commodore Phillimore, whose ship, the *Inflexible*, had been damaged in the Straits, and who was the Principal Naval Transport Officer, or P.N.T.O., known to the scurrilous army as "Pinto." Together we wrestled with the problems of "G" ships and "troop carriers" and all the small craft so woefully deficient. The unloading of ships had either to be done by our far too scanty barges and tugs, transferring stores to the shores, or to our two floating depot ships, or else ocean-going store-ships had to be put alongside one another, and stores derricked across. Now putting vessels alongside was an unheard-of proceeding, and especially so in that Mudros Harbour which was often wind-swept and choppy. However, if Government was to foot the bill, then the masters were willing to do it, and we found it a simple enough procedure, which much facilitated business, and little damage was done.

Especially did I strike up a friendship with one Henry Valentine Simpson, late Captain R.N., the representative of the Transport Department of the Admiralty. His morning joy was that though wearing Naval uniform he was not under the Admiral's orders. He knew how that must be anathema to the Admiral, and chortled thereat. But Naval routine was too much for him, and one fine morning he found that orders had come for his enslavement. An officer of interesting and decided views, he had some sense of the feelings which animated the "masters" of ocean

ships, and was out to prevent Naval ways from trampling on their feelings, which with the best intentions in the world they were apt to do.

I was myself fortunate in being a brevet-colonel, and therefore ranking with post-captains of three years' service, an advantage when working with the Navy, where you stand on the order of your going to an extent which the Army does not realize. With us a junior Naval officer attached to the Army or in liaison with them will get full attention, but with the Navy the matter of rank is very important. This is worth remembering when joint operations come along again, unless the Naval outlook on such matters has changed since the days when together we tempted fortune in the *Ægean*. My colleague of the Marines was able to put me wise on many matters connected with Naval routine which helped me in understanding what that Service wanted and understood. Not that Marine officers are always unprejudiced guides in such matters.

There was a pleasant story of a United States cruiser in the port of Bombay when the Staff College students were studying port organization. They visited the cruiser. One of them with some little knowledge of the ways of navies saw a sour-faced officer standing apart.

"Are you the Marine officer?" he asked.

"Sir, I am," was the reply.

"Have you many Marines on this ship?"

"One hundred, sir."

"As many as that? What do they do?"

"I guess, sir, they run the whole d——d ship!" was spat out with some bitterness.

"How many bluejackets are there?"

"There are 700 bluejackets, sir, on this ship."

"And what do they do?"

"They just scrr-atch themselves."

And it has ever been thus. My Marine colleague was only a Lieut.-Colonel and could not get away with the goods as comfortably as my post-captain-of-three-years-standing rank enabled me to do.

A curious sensation of having been there before often came to me on the island. At the far end of the harbour were a number of the little windmills of the *Ægean* and the French Territorial Zouaves—from Algiers, and other French details and the French army carts of Africa with their six-foot-high wheels were about in the little town on shore. I always felt that I had seen it all before and belonged to it. I was as a lad brought up among Crimean memories, and I may have seen pictures of the French at Gallipoli in 1854/55 or on the Crimea, though I have no remembrance of such. It seemed more vivid than mere memory or hearsay, and whenever I looked at the row of windmills at the end of the harbour, or saw a French cart carrying barrels of wine, the live sensation came afresh. My father was at Varna and in the Crimea, and I have always puzzled at the thought that I might have been looking with his eyes.

And as we improved the camps and erected hospitals, the shipping daily increased. The harbour with its hundreds of marooned vessels, battleships of the two fleets, the British obsolescent, the French almost pre-Trafalgar, cruisers, destroyers, Admiralty yachts, store-ships and transports, mine-sweepers, trawlers, tugs, barques, Mr. Churchill's black-beetles, i.e. the huge motor lighters prepared for Borkum, all made a remarkable scene of strength and activity, however vain. The high limestone mountains, jagged and serrated on two sides of the harbour, carried wonderful colours in the evening sun. The harbour charts were of interest, executed some time in the forties by a party under a certain Captain Corrie, R.N.

The somewhat fantastic names of the jagged peaks

took our fancy. They ran thus : DEN, MAD, EBEIR, ROC. And then one day some bright lad read them backwards and discovered that they spelt "Corrie be damned." He was no doubt a commander of the good old sort.

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CHAPTER IX

SUVLA BAY

MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CAMPAIGN

WE arrived to grip this problem of maintenance and the communications just as Sir Ian's plans for the new landing had taken final shape. The Cabinet, we were told, had decided to give Sir Ian everything he wanted in the way of troops, or what passed for troops in those days, and were determined to see the venture through. That is to say, they had accepted Sir Ian's report that another effort had a reasonable prospect of success. What those prospects really were and what they appeared to be to the troops themselves are perhaps more frankly revealed and discussed in Ashmead Bartlett's book than elsewhere.

Before the work of concentration began we had little time to get the work done described in the last chapter. The disgraceful scenes at Mudros had been put an end to. Decent and disciplined rest camps had been established. Shore hospitals were getting into order. Commandants, provost-marshals and sanitary officers were getting things into a condition that would keep the troops in health. Such little water as could be found was being developed. By these means we were able to bring off the 29th Division for their first period of rest away from the flies and from permanent front-line duty. With beer and bathing life became a little more rosy, and they were our only "storm troops." The 13th Division, the first of the new troops under General Maude, was sent off to Helles to gain some

experience, and it was fortunate in having a commander who had very definite experience of the modern conditions in France.

At this time my Chief, General Altham, found it necessary to get into collision with G.H.Q. There had been a terrible scandal over the medical arrangements of the first landings. That scandal was mainly due to the failure of the General Staff in gauging the casualties to be expected. The estimating of loss from enemy action is entirely a General Staff matter. They alone can form any idea of what is likely to happen, and it is of course obvious that they may very seriously miscalculate. The medical authorities are concerned in adding to this estimate what the expectation of loss from disease may be. At the first landings the loss was far, far greater than that for which preparation had been made. In the nature of things it was either necessary to send the hospital ships back to England or to Egypt and Malta. But there was very little accommodation at either, and not enough ships to think of a round trip Home for a fortnight. But neither Egypt nor anyone else had been given timely warning of what was about to happen in the first landing. Casualties at least three times as great as expected took place in the first landings, and the scandal that resulted therefrom still makes those who took part shudder. All the hospital ships were soon full to overflowing, and the wounded had to be sent to Egypt on the iron decks of troopships or store-ships, with neither stretchers nor bedding, and practically without attendants. There were naturally no reserves of orderlies, nurses or medical officers on the shell-swept mainland. One medical officer could be found perhaps for a store-ship, with a couple of orderlies and a very small supply of drugs and dressings. In one case a veterinary surgeon had to take charge of such a vessel. It was no one's fault. Everything

that could be done under the circumstances was done. Sir John Maxwell in Egypt rose manfully to this occasion, as he did to many others presented by the operations in the Levant. The charitable people of all races in Egypt poured out their money, ladies trained and untrained hurried to help receive the crowds of unattended wounded that came off the iron decks soaked in their stiffened blood. Hotels and public buildings were extemporized as hospitals. It was a real bad show manfully met, and the blame was only due to those who undertook this madcap expedition without the least attempt to think where it was to lead them.

G.H.Q., however, were not to be caught this time. They estimated for 30,000 casualties! But after all estimation is but the germ. It was one thing to say they expected 30,000 casualties, and quite another to expect hospitals to grow from out the ground at a moment's notice, though it must of course be acknowledged that secrecy and departmental preparation do not share the same bed easily.

Just as brewers know first where regiments are moving in relief, so, if heads of departments know too soon, human nature will ensure that they give the show away by a natural solicitude. Allowance must be made for the difficulty of giving supplying departments sufficient notice of secret operations. To get over the necessity of early information without giving a clue to plans is where the Q.M.G. of an army in the field is most put to it.

In this case, however, the arrangements proposed partook of the same fatal want of a sense of proportion as characterized the whole expedition. Sir Ian was prepared to try again, the Cabinet was prepared to give him more troops, plenty of troops, yet there was no time, if the dates proposed were to be adhered to, to make preparation.

THE PLANS FOR THE SECOND LANDING 147

The executive departments at the War Office did their best, they sent all the hospital ships that could be got in the time, and they offered several general hospitals with equipment and tents and personnel.

But the bare island of Mudros without piers, with no facilities for landing, with practically no water, and very little timber or labour available was not a promising site on which to erect half a dozen general hospitals at a few days' notice. However, the Director of Medical Services at G.H.Q. was quite equal to the occasion! He issued orders that the D.D.M.S. on the Lines of Communication should arrange to erect the hospitals and cater for 30,000 casualties!

Then the Inspector-General of Communications rose in his wrath, and he placed before the Commander-in-Chief the infernal impertinence of G.H.Q. planning operations, and then in a light-hearted manner pushing off arrangements for which they had made no timely preparation on to the shoulders of those who could not possibly command the necessary resources. He absolutely refused to guarantee that a single hospital on shore could be ready, for incidentally, he remarked, there was no small craft to land the wounded. Where there should be a couple of hundred motor-boats there were not two dozen. He would do his best to erect any hospitals sent him, and he refused to take any responsibility beyond the use of his best endeavours. And I really think that for a while he did wake up G.H.Q. from their administrative coma.

THE PLANS FOR THE SECOND LANDING

For the advantage of giving some consecutive story to my yarns, I would review the story of the Second Landing. The British were now hanging on by their eyelids to two beaches. Again and again had the original troops of the first landings been flung at the Turkish positions. As fresh divisions from various

sources had been made available they had been expended fruitlessly in quite unavailing attempts to gain more ground and more hinterland. The troops themselves and even their commanders, as Ashmead Bartlett states with gusto, were fed up with the impossibility of the task before them. At Helles, under Hunter-Weston, were the 29th, 42nd, 52nd and Royal Naval Divisions, with a portion of their artillery. On the British right between them and the sea were two French divisions of African troops.

At Anzac Cove, under General Sir William Birdwood, were what was now practically three divisions of Australian and New Zealand troops. The constant attempts to achieve more ground have been bitterly criticized as carried out on lines long abandoned in France, viz. the general tactical attack, on the Napoleonic principle of "*On s'engage partout et on voit*," which had held the tactical field since the South African War. Troops it was claimed had been fruitlessly squandered in attacks on broad fronts, especially at Helles, rather than by the concentrated blow on successive small objectives. The plaint was true enough, though with the commanders and staff available it was probably not possible to evolve anything else. However true that may have been, formation after formation had been shattered, and Sir Ian Hamilton had declared that no more was to be done on the present fronts, and that he must look for a third effort elsewhere. But he gave it as his opinion that a third effort was a feasible proposition and would not be throwing good money after bad.

Now there were at this stage only two courses of action possible for Lord Kitchener and the Cabinet. They must either confess themselves beaten, and order a withdrawal, if indeed a withdrawal was possible, which many doubted, or agree with their Commander-in-Chief and support him to the best of their ability

with all that he wanted. Not unnaturally, and not realizing the slippery incline down which they had already been impelled, they accepted the opinion of those in authority on the spot. It is indeed hard to see what else could have been done. The hour for calling a halt had seemingly passed. The cup must be drained to the end. It must also be remembered that accounts of Turkish straits, by no means all untrue, encouraged the British to continue.

THE CHOICE OF OBJECTIVES

It was at this time that opinion, especially the opinion of the map strategists, turned to Bulair, at the end of the Peninsula. Here again the good Mr. Bartlett criticizes the High Command for not deciding to make the new attack there. He but voices popular opinion.

It is not possible to appreciate the points involved without reflecting on the whole conditions of sea transport that prevailed. Since the appearance of the enemy submarines, everything was brought to the beaches from Mudros Harbour, a distance of several hours' steam for small vessels, i.e. the troop-carriers and the small store-ships. It would not be possible with the craft at the Navy's disposal to lengthen the line of supply by adding another 100 miles or so to the round trip from Lemnos to the new beach. The submarines had for the moment been less active, presumably because when all vessels of any size were behind nets in Mudros Harbour, there was not much to tempt them out. A surprise landing might just allow of vessels getting near the beaches again, but it was pretty sure that after a few hours the submarines would reappear.

Therefore it was essential that the new point of landing should be within effective reach of the base at Mudros and the advanced base of Imbros. It was

quite impossible to protect ships lying off Bulair at the end of the Gulf, while at Suvla Bay there was an area that could be netted and allow a few ships lying close to the beach.

Secondary arguments do not much matter if the primary one is decisive. The dissipation of force, however, would be a matter for consideration, and a landing at Bulair had that argument against it.

The bulk of the argument decided G.H.Q. in favour of attempting the fresh coup at Suvla Bay, where the formation of the coast did afford some prospect of actually getting on shore, and penetrating inland. But that prospect was not too alluring in view of the country itself.

Looking at the Peninsula from the sea, as Sir Ian had so often done, the great massive cliffs of the Anzac front changed on the left to the horseshoe formation of Suvla Bay, which was surrounded by lesser hills enclosing a couple of miles of low ground in the middle of which was the so-called salt lake, which in August was but a dry, very friable alluvial flat. On the shore of the bay a higher sand spit separated the "lake" from the sea, and on this spit was a small hill known as Lala Baba. From Lala Baba a track improving to a rough road led through the hills towards Maidos, on the Straits of the Dardanelles in rear of the narrows. Looking at the map it seemed so easy to force a way through to Maidos, and it was hoped to do this and thus cut off the Turks in front of Helles and Anzac.

The actual hills to be secured, however, were extremely difficult. On the north they were fairly bare and rocky where they ran down to the northern arm of the bay. But in the centre on the important point they were extremely difficult, covered with almost impenetrable holly scrub, and the sort of terrain that only veteran troops trained as the British Indian Army

in India were trained could hope to operate in successfully.

Sir Ian's plan aimed at forcing his way through to Maidos by landing two divisions at Suvla Bay, while a simultaneous attack was to be made from Helles and Anzac, to pin the Turks to their ground, prevent a transference of troops to meet the Suvla landing, while if possible the Helles Corps should break through the Turkish front at Krithia and the Anzac force gain the commanding heights above Kilid Bahr.

It was believed, and rightly so, that the only force to be met with in the first instance in front of Suvla Bay would be a couple of *Gendarmerie* battalions with a few field guns in the hills, blocking the road via Anafarta to Maidos.

So the force under General Birdwood was to receive the 13th Division, a brigade of the 10th Division and the 29th Indian Brigade from Helles, while the new Corps from Home, under General Sir Frederick Stopford, was to land at Suvla Bay, to consist in the first instance of the 11th Division and the 10th Division, less the Brigade to be landed at Anzac. Two more divisions were to come up later from Home, viz. the 53rd and 54th, while General Hamilton was also to have a lien if necessary on the Yeomanry Division in Egypt which would come dismounted.

THE CONCENTRATION

Before we had done much more than shake out the position at Mudros, we were called on to handle the whole plan of the concentration of the troops for the new enterprise. These consisted of the 10th, 11th, and 13th Divisions for the first phase and the 53rd and 54th for the second. We were of course taken fully into G.H.Q.'s confidence, but the mass of the troops and their subordinate commanders did not know till they found themselves landing, the

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particular spots on which the new effort was to be made.

It may be asserted unhesitatingly that the actual plans drawn up by G.H.Q. and the Naval Headquarters were not only admirable and easy to handle, but they did work admirably, and we had no difficulty in bringing up the blocks of transports and flotilla into their places according to schedule. The plan and orders issued in themselves may be accepted as a model worthy of study as a good exemplum for future work.

The 13th Division had arrived ahead of the others and was sent across to Helles for a while, thereby gaining experience without giving away intentions. The infantry and some artillery of the 11th Division was brought to Imbros to cross in the "black beetles," the powerful motor lighters, in which troops or a couple of guns and teams could be under cover and emerge on to the shore by a drawbridge lowered from the prow. During the concentration many of the Divisional Commanders and their Staffs looked in on us at Mudros, eager to gather such conception of what was before them as we could give. Generals Maude and Mahon, the two younger and more active Commanders and their Staff, were with us, and it was generally pathetic to see the zeal with which they looked forward to the new venture, hearing little of the dissatisfaction among the other troops. Spirits ran high in all three divisions, the 10th and 13th especially being in high fettle.

It was now my special duty with my assistants to watch carefully the concentration and movement of vessels and report to G.H.Q. as each and all came into the picture. Part of the 10th Division lay ashore round us in Mudros Harbour to cross in the carriers. The 11th Division were at Imbros, and from Mitylene, from Egypt and from Malta great ships lay ready to slip off for their secret rendezvous at the beaches.

At length the date of concentration and then of landing arrived. The collection of vessels at Mitylene would, it was hoped, indicate to the Turks some threat to be made once more on the Asiatic shore. How much they really suspected it is impossible to say. Some fresh attempt they knew was preparing. And in Mudros Harbour those terrible and ominous birds of prey, which gave so much away, the hospital ships, had come to anchor. We had not at that time got the medical authorities into a becoming state of commonplace discipline. Lying within the netted safety of Mudros Harbour, there was not the least necessity for the hospital ships to blare out their presence at night, by showing their continuous band of green lights on their sides with the red crosses in the centre, and this alone must have given the show away more than anything else. In South African days, when ambulance trains were new things, their movement by day always signalled something doing, and they ought always to have concentrated by night running.

SUVLA BAY

By the night of the 6th everything was ready, and our great ships had glided by or made their signals from their *rendezvous*. Enemy submarines for the moment had been conspicuous by their absence. We were to take risks for a few hours with the transports, and the warships were to leave the harbour and concentrate in support of the landing.

As soon as it was dusk the 11th Division at Imbros filed into the black beetles in Kephalos Bay, and the 10th at Mudros crowded on to the "carriers," the Margate and the Isle of Man packets, and slipped away into the darkness. Far away along the beaches now and again some gun flared out into the night, the usual routine which was neither to be hurried nor

burked. Now and again Sergeant Osman, the gunner with the big gun in the cave at Gapa Tepe, would sling his handful of shrapnel on to the Anzac beaches, lest the usual night landings went too peacefully.

But though the whole sea was alive with the flit of small craft like ducks on a lagoon, and the great forms of the warships and cruisers glided to the beaches, there was no sign that the Turk suspected what we were at.

By dawn there came to us at Mudros the mutter of great gun-firing from Helles and Anzac, a subdued murmur that never ceased. The Helles Corps was once more flinging itself at the old Turkish positions at Krithia and Achi Baba, the Australians and New Zealanders with Maude's Division were swarming out of their deep gorges and gullies and scaling the steep ravines on their way to gain the heights of Sari Bair, along the tops of which the great guns of the fleet were blowing the rocks sky-high. And now and again, to those in the boats and shipping, some faint cheer came down the gullies on the morning breeze. But whatever was happening, it must be hours before a decision could be arrived at.

The real interest lay at Suvla Bay. A glance at the sketch map will show what was doing. The three brigades of the 11th Division, with their small array of guns, were to land at B and C Beaches, south of Nibrunezi Point, and march as swiftly as might be to the hills directly inland. The 10th Division were to land at the "old" A Beach within the bay and seize Lala Baba and then move to Hill 10. The beaches, reconnaissance had said, were easy.

All went well in the crossing. The covering detachments on cruisers got ashore easily enough by 10.30 in the evening, and the 11th Division lighters ran ashore without hindrance at B and C, but alas at A the shore was unpropitious and the lighters stuck away from the coast. It was necessary to bring them

round to B and C. That meant that the two divisions were getting intermingled. Lala Baba was held by a Turkish detachment, who took some dislodging by young troops in the dark. It was gallantly stormed by the 32nd Brigade by 2 a.m. Then to the north of Lala Baba on Hill 10 were more Turks, few, but disturbing. As the 10th Division was late ashore the 11th had to turn north and capture Hill 10, and this eventually was done in style, soon after dawn. Daylight showed the shore covered with troops, sailors, stores, etc. But things had stuck.

Away to the south the great guns muttered and echoed, and a titanic struggle on the distant crags and gullies was obviously in progress, but on the open sandy shores of Suvla Bay the troops lay about sleeping, resting, even bathing, while sailors and fatigue parties were unloading stores. G.H.Q. had expected that the 11th Division would be well on its way to the Anafarta Hills by now, and nothing was being done. For reasons, which no doubt the official history will explain, the taking of Hill 10 finished the activities, and it was not till late in the afternoon, four or five o'clock, that the brigades of the 10th and 11th Divisions moved in long open lines round the north side of the Salt Lake, which they could have crossed, and then wheeled south towards Scimitar Hill.

THE WATER QUESTION

As the water question was perhaps the principal contributory to the debacle that followed, it is worth understanding. It was not one of the essential points that was studied by those who thought the whole thing so feasible. There was practically no water on the Peninsula, nor was there much at Mudros. *Nearly all the water used by the force came from England or Egypt the whole time*—a pretty country to go soldiering in!

In Mudros Harbour a large new oil tanker was used as water ship, holding perhaps 7,000 tons. She had been brought up filled from the waterworks at Port Said, and kept filled by smaller tankers from that port or by water from England. All vessels returning pumped their spare water into her. Tardily and by way of kindness, the Navy erected a condenser in Mudros Harbour, but it could not make any large contribution to the problem. There was a certain amount of water at Helles, a spring or two at Anzac, and nothing at Suvla Bay till a well or two was found close up under the firing line, and that was trivial in its yield.

Water barges were filled and towed over to the beaches to be sunk from time to time by enemy fire. There was not a quarter of the number necessary, and unfortunately all this sort of provision had been confided to the Navy, who did not understand such matters. It took all Sir Edward Altham's cunning to persuade the Admiral to get and equip a few spare ones lest the enemy sink all we had.

Now G.H.Q. had exercised a certain amount of forethought in this matter, so far as the landing went. We had 10,000 tins of "potted water" prepared in Egypt. That is to say, clean kerosene oil tins were filled and sealed at Port Said and shipped off to the beaches on one of the first vessels. Each four-gallon tin had a lashing tied round it for easy carriage. But it is not enough to provide water. What was wanted was a highly organized water discipline from the beginning. An officer's guard on every group of water lighters, one company per battalion told off to handle and carry the tins of water. A disciplined organized water-porterage column was needed. In fact the landing wanted sense and vigour in the Corps Staff, and the Q. Staff of that Corps was not selected for its knowledge or activity. Nor indeed was its commander,

Sir Frederick Stopford, an unemployed officer whose more recent years had been spent in an office, quite the man to use for the job. He was removed a few days later, but why should a distinguished officer have been selected to undergo such an obvious course of contumely or have been supplied with a staff some of whom through no fault of their own were neither fitted by health, age nor training for their posts. Only Lord Kitchener could answer that question.

Now that we have a bird's-eye view of the water problem, we can understand how, with that young Army in those terrible hot days of August in the *Ægean*, the seeds of failure were with us ere we started.

THE DEBACLE

Facilis descensus Avernî. The few fortunate hours which Sir Ian Hamilton had rightly known to be at his disposal had gone, had been squandered beyond repair, partly by events, largely from want of drive and organizing power. First the failure to land at A Beach had mixed the divisions. Some delay, natural enough, in storming Lala Baba, the crossing and mixing of the brigades, the necessity not only of taking Hill 10 but of using the 11th Division, who should have been marching hard for Chocolate and Scimitar Hill and the Anafarta Gorges, guns or no guns, with the warships' guns behind them, had all contributed to the writing of TOO LATE across the story. Many there be who doubt that given all the good luck possible, more good luck than a commander dare reckon on, success lay not within our reach. *Le Bon Dieu sait, moi ne sais pas.* But I hae me doots.

The attack around the edge of the Salt Lake enabled Brigadier-General Hill, who was in command of a mixture of the battered 10th and 11th Divisions, to occupy Chocolate Hill some little time before

sunset, and to this extent make good the position. The next day, Sunday, was like a Bank Holiday at Brighton, the troops apparently bathing and resting. The liaison officers from G.H.Q. were in despair, and at last Sir Ian, who had not left his command centre at Imbros while the struggles at Anzac and Helles were in progress, came over. He gave peremptory orders for an attack, but it could not be got going till the morning of the 9th, when practically forty-eight hours had been lost. Gallant, unco-ordinated and often uncommanded attacks were being pushed with great self-sacrifice and heavy loss on to the hill in front of Chocolate Hill, to which the name of Scimitar Hill was given. The ground was broken and scrub-clad beyond belief. The troops could not see each other, and they were harassed by innumerable Turkish snipers, while the enemy were obviously now before us in strength. The day petered out in glorious, gallant and futile attempts to get forward. The great guns of the fleet roared and blared and blew the rocks to the skies and—set the scrub and grass on fire. Dead and wounded were burnt therein, and the young troops quailed, as well they might. Night arrived in horror and dismay. Thirst was more appalling than ever and the troops were beside themselves. Everywhere stragglers from the front came down to the beaches searching for water, piercing the canvas hose-pipes with knife and bayonet in their hurry to fill their water bottles. The “potted” water was not yet mobilized nor did a water discipline yet exist.

A well somewhere near the front line was also acting as a honey-pot to swarms of thirst-stricken soldiery. All along the beaches the wounded were arriving in pitiful, disordered array, to be taken off anyhow by trawlers and Naval picket boats. During the day the 53rd Welch Division was landed, a division at the time, owing to the incidence of the Territorial

system in Wales, perhaps the least effective of all that group. But they too were hurried forward into the same shambles, crossing the Salt Lake in long open lines, to join without effect the crowd of dismayed soldiery, the heaps of burnt corpses and thirst-mad men of yesterday, and they achieved nothing, but lost heavily. In vain the brigadiers struggled to keep things straight in the scrub and the scarred ravines. Neither victory nor order was theirs to compel, and another day drew to its close in confusion worse confounded.

It boots not here to continue the description.

Another division, the 54th, was landed during the night of the 10th. Work on the beaches grew better. Positions were slightly improved on the left.

At Anzac terrible struggles had taken place on the 7th and 8th. The 13th Division, the 29th Indian Brigade, and the Dominion troops, had surpassed themselves in daring, but had failure as their guerdon and had suffered enormously. They had gained what at that time passed for considerable ground in the direction of Sari Bair, but it profited them little. Their shot too was spent. At Helles the Corps had fully carried out its duty of preventing the Turks withdrawing, which it may be said they showed no intention of doing. They suffered terrible losses and they gained nothing but a few trenches. The Turks still frowned down on them from Achi Baba and Krithia.

On the 15th, General Stopford was relieved of the command he should never have been asked to fill. Two of the Divisional Commanders, physically unfit for the task given them, had also come away, and younger men had come in their places; but young or old, dugouts or serving soldiers, the task was beyond courage and enthusiasm.

ONCE AGAIN

Once again the unfortunate Sir Ian, still unable to realize that the Army was beaten to a standstill and knew it, was to try not his fortune, for that had long deserted him, or his luck, for that had left him, but his troops, his poor, gallant, fate-bound troops. Not yet was anyone man enough among those to whom the world would listen, to say emphatically that all was over.

Between the 7th and the 10th of August 6,000 to 7,000 men had been expended at Helles, 13,000 at Anzac, and the heart and guts torn out of the indomitable Dominion soldiers, so that even they could cheer no more. Close on 9,000 had been lost and lifted from Suvla Bay, and the Bulgarian dysentery was just catching hold. And once more were the troops to be put at those jumps that none could by any possible means leap.

The poor, willing, super-gallant remnants—the thrice-patched remnant—of the old contemptibles, the 29th Division, was brought round. Sir Frances Stopford had faded away and De Lisle, the fighting De Lisle, the cowrie of many markets, took temporary command of the 9th Corps of Suvla. The 29th Division, and the fragments of the 11th, were to try Scimitar Hill once more, while Anzac was to be lashed for one more attempt. Since the great defeats of the 6th–10th August only the dismounted regiments of the Yeomanry Division had arrived from Egypt as reinforcements. The Yeomen of England, the tradesmen of the county towns, the hunt-servants, the farmers' sons and the country gentry, and four brigades, barely 1,000 strong at that, lay in reserve by Lala Baba. At three o'clock on the sultry afternoon of the 21st August, the guns of the fleet and the shore artillery opened and roared. The Turkish trench lines were a mass of flame, twelve-inch guns from the battleships out-

topped the din, and once more the rocks and stones of the Anafarta Hills flew heavenwards. Once more the scrub and grass blazed to burn the wounded, and as the fire lifted the troops poured out to the attack, the 29th on Scimitar Hill, the 11th to the south of it on the trenches below Hill 60. Once again the troops got lost and mixed in the ravines. Once again the divisions were driven together by Turkish fire and became confused. Till long after dusk the troops struggled with a gallantry that richly deserved success, and they got none, not a shred that was worth a grenadier's bones. Late in the afternoon the Yeomanry swept steadily in open lines across the Salt Lake, spattered by shrapnel but undismayed, and they too were lost and waste in the rocky gullies and the scrub and the flames—just pathetic cannon fodder chucked in to make a Turkish holiday—magnificent beneath the great masses of the high hills, but not war. And that was the end of it. We sat ourselves down to wonder if Government would let a winter campaign come by default on the windswept beaches, or if the hypnotism of Sir Ian's hopes would at last be put to the test of hard thinking. Gallant, chivalrous Sir Ian! He whose baptism had begun at another scene of fighting men's despair at Majuba, who had led us to victory in South Africa, who had seen the Japs storm Port Arthur. When we criticize we are apt to forget that men are doing the best that all their training and their nature will let them.

But now the dislike of G.H.Q., which had been so prominent, surpassed all bounds, and the Army clamoured that the whole of them should be changed, and only the more disciplined of the subordinate Commanders could keep their tongues between their teeth. A sad pass to bring a vast army to! Yet among them all, Commanders and Staff, were some of the very best officers of the Service.

WHAT IT WAS LIKE ON THE COMMUNICATIONS

Away back on the communications we did not know night from day. As the first series of transport and carriers had faded away in the night of the 6th August and each was signalled as safely off, our immediate attention was to the wounded. They soon poured in, on every sort of conveyance in one drama of horror. Trawlers came alongside us piled high with dead and dying, whom no one would take on the beaches. Hospital ships hurried in to unload into our hourly growing hospital camps ashore. Our cemeteries grew apace. Landing on some job intent at the Mudros pier, to my horror I found piled on the jetty near our cemetery a score of naked corpses. They had just been landed I was told from a hospital ship lying in the harbour. In my wrath I turned my launch to board her, and there I fell on the medical officer in command. "Sir," he said, "I have twice the number on board than I can accommodate, none of us have eaten or slept for forty-eight hours. I have no spare bed-clothes, all the blankets are needed for those who lie on deck. I have no time to think of the dead and I cannot cater for the living. In harbour I cannot throw the dead overboard, but I must have them out of the way!" I looked at him, nodded and turned down the gangway. There was nothing more to be said.

The 53rd and 54th Divisions blew in on great ships like the *Aquitania*, a brigade on each deck, and were pushed on in succession. We endeavoured to organize the advanced bases. At Helles piers were made by sinking small fruit steamers, filling them with ballast and running tram rails along their decks. They helped the barges to unload, but we could not get even our "G" ships alongside. The Army Service and Army Ordnance Corps worked wonders from their floating

depots at Mudros, and despite the despair of the troops, their feeding began to be organized, and the British fight better when well fed.

Our shore hospitals increased and nurses arrived for them. We could cope with the lighter cases from the beaches, but as each attack was repeated, the horror of the trawlers was renewed. The casualties were always more than the possible provision. Peyton and his Yeomen came through, and were transferred to the carriers, and "Scatters" Wilson blew in to revive the old acquaintance of Simla days, with his adjutant, Wedgwood Benn, strange fellow-comrades to share the Suvla flats.

At last the great last blow had been entered in the great book of failures. The 29th Division had shot their bolt, and we now settled down to maintain the force that waited. So far as the actual holding of trenches went, things were comfortable. Food and clothes and stores were landed. As there was not much artillery and few animals were on the beaches, the absence of those great consumers of tonnage enabled us to begin to pile up reserves. An initial folly, so typical of British amateurism in the care of troops, was now brought to end in the arrival of a proper Field Force Canteen. However good rations are, troops need a thousand extras. Pay and the power to purchase is an immense factor in psychology and the maintenance of moral. The peddling of tooth paste and salmon by odd Greek pedlars did not fill the bill. And all the while the French troops were drinking their *litres* of red *vin ordinaire* happily at little booths and little tables, while the British had nothing.

When it came, with the good rations and the varied scale of equivalents, Atkins, the soldier, and 'Arry 'Otspur, the yeoman, took heart of grace and began to forget the horrors they had gone through. And

Tullibardine's Scottish Horse indulged in "Scotch nights," and the sound of the bagpipes arose from the trenches, to the annoyance of the Turk, who would let off fits of rage.

On the *Arragon* I would pace the decks o' nights with Henry Valentine Simpson, and we knew, though no one would admit of it, that evacuation was the only way. The great adventure had failed for all time, and I was sure that we must come away, and we worked out plans therefor. Sir Edward in his den amid the *Petite Amours* knew the same but would hardly voice it. All who knew we must come away feared untold loss, but it always seemed to be a feasible operation.

At G.H.Q., Ashmead Bartlett relates, a stupor of despair had set in, and to some extent it had been so. General Ellison, the new Q.M.G., had broad views on most subjects, and confided most of the executive work to Sir Edward, and we certainly got on with it. Depots, hospitals and camps were in a reasonable condition. But winter was coming and what about it? Sir Ian, if he thought of proposing evacuation, would very properly tell no one. Push on with work for the winter was the programme, and then a little sou'-wester would wash away our baby piers and set our sunken fruiters agley, just to "larn" us what a winter beach could be like! Bartlett has also pointed out how G.H.Q. lived in the foulest discomfort amid dust and flies and beastliness in tents at Kephalos Point on the island of Mudros. The Corps Headquarters in the caves and dugouts on the beaches were far better off than G.H.Q., who had quitted the *Arcadia* when the first coming of the submarines had made her unhealthy. There were neither chateaux nor cottages that could have given them the minimum of accommodation. And for the anxious difficult work of a G.H.Q. in despair, a fly-blown dust-swept camp is no

place to steady thoughts and nerves. A liner inside nets in Kephalos Bay should have been demanded. In France whole villages ministered to the needs of a G.H.Q. But with Sir Ian the stars in their courses had him at every turn.

Through us at our H.Q. came all those Commanders to whom had come the "order of the bowler hat," as the young officers called it, the appointment at Stellenbosch, as we used to say in South Africa, which corresponded to the Command of the Belem Rangers of the Peninsular War. There came William Sitwell, the same with whom the "Boers had been werry angry" many a year before; poor Hamersley from the 11th Division with a clot of blood; Mahon, who had resigned his division for reasons of anger—and eat his fighting heart out, till he could arrange his return, as the result I like to think of my advice; Inglefield and Egerton and many another, and we heard the story of failure and folly as it appeared to them, and how there is a limit to any miracle working, fight the soldiery never so bravely. And then from France came the new and younger commanders, so that the brigade and divisions were soon in the hands of fitter and younger men. Many of the New Army battalions had been commanded by retired officers, staunch and experienced if a little old, and they had mostly laid down their pensioned lives on the beaches. Young commanders to take their places now passed through us, and found that behind the lines things were now in order. The great platforms of the *Arragon* Junction were more valuable than ever.

P.N.T.O. Phillimore was succeeded by P.N.T.O. FitzMaurice, who flew into a fine Naval fury if he was addressed as "Pinto," and with him our business went even more efficiently than with his predecessor. Eager and helpful as they were, we did not get from them and from the Admiral anything like enough

small craft. We wanted ten times as much to handle the men and stores. We wanted someone from a port, a Number 2 or 3 from the Port of London, as part of our military staff, to whom the handling of tugs and cargo and derricks and small craft was his livelihood. *Ça y est*. Nevertheless, Commodore Fitz-Maurice was an organizer and did all he knew to bring system and order into the business. He wanted, among other things, to put an end to the allotment of "G" ships to the various departments, keeping them on a roster for allotment as required. As a principle I agreed with him, and later in Mesopotamia I beat any departments who suggested their own river-transport; but here the circumstances of the case made it an essential arrangement without which the work could not have been properly done, so I successfully resisted him. It was absurd that anyone except myself, acting for the I.G.C., should have any say in the matter. But the cursed dual control of non-combatant craft was a great bane. Admiral Wemyss was now in general control of the harbour and all its works, and was equally keen to advance the cause. An interview I had with him, however, illustrates well how different are the systems of Army and Navy. The Admiral came aboard and asked for Sir Edward. I said he was on shore. "How tiresome," said he, "I wanted him particularly."

"Can I be of any use?" I asked.

"No, I am afraid you can't. I wanted him to give me a company of infantry to help get some heavy guns to the fort at the harbour mouth."

They're like that in the Navy, said Henry Valentine; no captain would take an order from a staff officer, and I must say the Admiral did seem surprised when I told him I would order a company to be sent down at once.

CHAPTER X

THE EVACUATION OF SUVLA AND ANZAC

THE QUESTION OF EVACUATION

SO August passed into September and September into October, and there was no change except that, with Bulgaria coming in against us, there would be direct railway communication between the Central Powers and Turkey, and more munitions were likely to come through, and what would be far worse, some heavy howitzers that would blow us out of our trenches with only the sea behind us. Gas too was to be expected, and we had already got our own supply handy, but were not going to use it against the Turks if we could help it. It was the fashion to talk of the clean-fighting Turk, and though later we were not always prepared to accord that epithet, still it was a fair upstanding fight between worthy men, while the Bosch apparently was always the Bosch, and some say always will be. The fact that we had gas and were not going to use it first was probably soon known to the Turk, and at any rate we had not to face that added horror.

The views of the troops and the generals had obviously filtered Home, and the Cabinet was slowly bringing itself to think of the unthinkable.

But the fatal thought had not yet taken form, and we were mostly concerned in making things shipshape for the winter. Not only had the current rations to be landed, but at least two months' supply of food and ammunition were necessary as a reserve. It was well

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known that for weeks on end those peaceful shores would be lashed with storms and nothing could be landed. Even now an occasional gale would wash away our pierlets.

But the weeks wore on, and neither news nor orders came, only wild and often optimistic rumour. Letters and returning officers, however, were stirring opinion at Home. On October 17th appeared in the *Sunday Times* the now notorious interview with Ashmead Bartlett, the correspondent who had returned to England. Always at daggers drawn with G.H.Q., he spared no details of the state of affairs and what the Army had been through, and it stirred the whole nation.

The Cabinet decided to recall Sir Ian, and on October 20th General Sir Charles Monro was ordered to take over the command of the forces in the Mediterranean, and to report fully and frankly on the military position. We conveyed Sir Ian with as much ceremony as possible to a warship which had now been put at his disposal, and he left us with the sympathy of all those who realized the difficulties of high command called on to attempt an impossible task on inadequate means. And a commander who has been recalled should receive the respectful sympathy of every true soldier. Yet sympathize as one might with a gallant heart that was broken, we all knew that the time to change the bowling was long overdue.

Sir Charles Monro arrived on October 27th, and lost no time in examining all the beaches. By October 31st he despatched a remarkable, concise, unequivocal report to the effect that the position was quite impossible, that only the Australian and New Zealand troops were fit for renewed effort; the only course was evacuation and that, before the break-up of the weather should make it impossible.

But the Cabinet still hesitated. Monro was asked

to consult his Corps Commanders and give their views. Davies at Helles and Byng at Suvla unhesitatingly concurred, but Birdwood at Anzac, fearing the effect of evacuation on the Mohammedan world, was against it on political grounds.

Sir Charles did me the honour of asking my views as to the feasibility as a problem of movement, and I told him that I had been thinking of nothing else for weeks and was sure that it was inevitable and feasible, and that I did not believe, though it was none of my pigeon, that the loss would be heavy. I also told him that most officers with whom I had discussed the matter thought it impossible to get away. As a matter of fact Sir Charles, the Corps Commanders, and Admiral De Robeck estimated the loss at from 30 to 40 per cent.¹ The Cabinet were dismayed, and on November 3rd Lord Kitchener himself was invited to go out and assist them to arrive at a decision. It was then that Lord Kitchener, appalled at the idea that the heavy losses and tragedies of the campaign should end in abandonment, sent the well-known "*very secret*" wire to General Birdwood, telling him that it was hoped that the Admiralty would agree with a proposal of Keyes to make another Naval attempt to force the Straits and that we should support by an attack and landing at the Gulf of Xeres (Bulair). Birdwood was to command and take the pick of the force. Admiral Wemyss would probably assume Naval Command, Monro would go to Salonika. It ended up : "*I absolutely refuse to sign orders for evacuation, which I think would be the greatest disaster, and would condemn a very large number of men to death or imprisonment.*"

This was November 3rd. The last attack had been made on August 21st, and it was not till December 7th that we got the orders to go. During those months

¹ It was actually one man wounded.

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we suffered the dribbling losses that attend trench life, and the far severer loss from amœbic dysentery.

Even Sir William Birdwood had to reply that a renewed attack was not now feasible, but for all time controversialists will discuss whether Bulair or Suvla should have been the objective in July. Two factors will probably be forgotten, viz. the absurd want of small craft to tackle even the Helles-Suvla front, let alone one further afield, and probably the fact that though we could not land many guns the ships would have to stand too far out for effective support.

Very shortly afterwards Sir Charles Monro appointed me president of a small Committee, with Major Aspinall of the General Staff and Captain F. S. Mitchell, R.N., the Naval liaison officer at G.H.Q., to draw up a formal plan of evacuation. I was naturally extremely gratified, not only at being selected to do this, but at being able to submit the plans which I had been turning over backwards and forwards in my mind ever since the failure of August 21st convinced us all that the game was up.¹

BIG GUNS AT MUDROS

Lord Kitchener, with whom was General Horne as Artillery adviser, hurried out and was met at Mudros by Sir John Maxwell from Egypt and Sir Henry McMahon, the High Commissioner there, who came up to Mudros to take part in the discussion and especially to consider the effect on Egypt of evacuation, the question of its defence, and whether a counter-stroke elsewhere to minimize the humiliation of evacuation was feasible. This question of prestige was very much before the minds of the Easterners. Lord Kitchener himself was always keen on an attempt at Alexandretta in Ayas Bay, in the Gulf of Iskander, between Cyprus and the mainland. This was a very old story with the British, dating from the days of Chesney's Euphrates

¹ The details of our plan, which was accepted, are given later.

Valley Expedition, and its existence as a world factor under certain conditions was one of the reasons which decided us on the arrangements with Turkey which first took us to Cyprus.

But the stars in their courses would not come down on the side of those who would stay. Lord Kitchener went round all the fronts as Sir Charles Monro had done and was amazed—amazed at the difficulty of the positions held, amazed at the shell-swept beaches which were our advanced bases, amazed at the size of the mountains, amazed at what had been achieved and at the gallantry which alone could have achieved it, amazed that the Naval guns, as he saw for himself, could help us little, in fact amazed at everything that he saw, which till now he had never visualized.

On November 15th he telegraphed his impressions to the Prime Minister and he gave generous tribute to the troops.

"To gain what we hold has been a most remarkable feat of arms. . . . Turkish positions at Achi Baba and Kilid Bahr are natural fortresses of the most formidable nature. . . . The landings are precarious and often impossible through rough sea and want of harbours . . . everyone has done wonders by land and sea."

And then he stated what were undoubtedly the compensating facts :

"About 125,000 Turks have been immobilized by our occupation of the Peninsula and they are caused considerable loss, and until the recent German operations in Serbia opened communications with Turkey and changed the situation, practically the whole Turkish Army had to be held in readiness to defend the capital."

He then gave his opinion on evacuation :

"Careful and secret preparations for the evacuation of the Peninsula are being made. If undertaken it would be an operation of extreme military difficulty and danger, but I have hopes that given time and weather, which can be expected to be suitable till about the end of December, the troops will carry out this task with less loss than was previously estimated."

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But still the Cabinet could not make up their mind, and it took a biting memorandum from Mr. Bonar Law to get a decision. This is how that memorandum ended. After stating that every military authority without exception had been in favour of evacuation, and yet nothing had been done, then comes the mordant passage :

"But this is not all. Some time ago the Cabinet unanimously came to the conclusion that the War could not be carried on by a body so large as the Cabinet. A War Committee was therefore appointed. The views of the military authorities came before this Committee, two of whose members, the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty, were opposed in the strongest possible way to evacuation ; yet this Committee reported unanimously in favour of acting on the advice of our military advisers. Their recommendation was brought before the Cabinet, *with the result* that on a matter in regard to which delay must be dangerous and may be fatal *no decision has been reached*. I hope that my colleagues will agree with me that war cannot be carried to a successful issue by methods such as these."

Well done, Mr. Bonar Law. That's the stuff to give 'em !

This was dated December 4th and on December 7th the orders came to evacuate Suvla and Anzac, and to retain Helles for a while.

In the meanwhile Nature had decided to lend a hand in helping the gentlemen of England to make up their minds to save the Army.

WAITING FOR THE DECISION

While the months of inertia rolled on and the Cabinet failed to grip the situation or was waiting for something to turn up in the Balkans, we at Mudros had to face the fact that a winter campaign might be necessary. G.H.Q. had, as already stated, decided very properly that the winter reserves of food must be on shore, two months at least, and that all the winter clothing must be landed. Two heavy howitzers had arrived, but Sir Ian would never land them in

spite of Sir Edward Altham having said that we on the communications were able to do so, though he would not be able to take them off again. Had they been landed and another attempt to advance been tried, they should have had considerable effect.

Before Sir Charles Monro came to take over the command, General Ellison, the D.A.Q.M.G. of the force, had been relieved by General Walter Campbell, from Monro's own Army Headquarters in France. Ellison went to Egypt to form the Levant Base. In the meantime the Salonika policy was developing and orders came to withdraw the 10th Division from Simla and send it to Salonika, where its Commander, Sir Bryan Mahon, was to assume command of the British force then assembling. This was accomplished with no great difficulty, the division landing first at Mudros to be straightened out and re-equipped.

The situation in November was a curious one. We were certain or nearly certain that we should be ordered to evacuate, yet the days were running on. It might soon be too late and the force on the Peninsula might be isolated by storms for weeks on end. It had been decided to remove all surplus stores that could be spared, and the ludicrous situation arose that we were re-embarking one set of stores and at the same time landing food, clothing and ammunition for the winter as hard as we could.

THE GREAT BLIZZARD

While the reports from Lord Kitchener and Sir Charles Monro were being digested, and Cabinet mentality footled, Nature decided to take a hand at the game and expedite a decision. And this is how she did it. The last week in November was sultry. The winter clothing had been landed and even distributed to units, and was lying piled in the regimental dumps. On the 26th came a warm, almost tropical

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downpour. It rained and rained as if the gates of Heaven had opened. The trenches were filled. The Turkish dead were washed down to us, the whole of our position was swimming in water. Troops were drenched and the dugouts flooded. Suddenly the tropical rain ceased. On the Balkans, however, it had fallen as snow. Then the wind changed to the North and it blew—blew from the North across the Balkans and from off those snows. It blew as apparently it had rarely blown before. The sentries froze at their posts, the soaked soldiery, who had naturally enough not yet drawn the clothing that awaited them owing to the unusual heat, were huddled in their dugouts. Nothing was dry, the trenches knee-deep. And they froze where they lay. Ashmead Bartlett, in describing the tragedy, says :

“During this period Nature was writing her final memoranda on the same subject in letters of misery and blood—which find no parallel in warfare since the retreat of the Grand Army from Russia in 1812—on the Peninsula itself.”

Our losses from this cause were enormous, nearly 300 British soldiers were frozen to death where they stood, 16,000 cases of frost-bite and the effects of exposure were evacuated. The greater portion of these came from Suvla Bay, which was much more exposed, and was responsible for 75 per cent. of the loss.

The Turks on the drier ground were somewhat better off and suffered less severely, but the effective description by Ashmead Bartlett may again be quoted :

“The Turks also suffered, but not to the same extent. Unable to remain in the flooded trenches, preferring to risk being frozen to death by the blasts outside, the unfortunate troops, Christian and Infidel, had no alternative but to sit on the exposed parapets separated from one another by only a few yards of storm-swept ground. A common humanity dictated that hostilities should cease, under such conditions, and neither side attempted to molest its freezing opponents of a few hours before.”

It was a pretty enough ending to the regime of Dilly and Dally, whose feeble minds at last were stimulated to come to a decision. It must be remembered that at this time Sir William Robertson had not been given his position as Chief of the Imperial General Staff. That body was not yet functioning as a master key, and was not yet in charge of all operations.

THE MAKING OF A PORT OF REFUGE

A distressing result of the blizzard was the destruction in Kephalos Bay on the island of Imbros. This little bay, protected by nets only open to the North, was sheltered from the southerly gales. But the blizzard blew from the North and wrought havoc with all the small craft which were in process of collection there for the purposes of the evacuation. Tugs, fruiters, steamers, "G" ships, were blown high and dry inland, and most of the lesser craft were destroyed.

Admiral Wemyss decided that he could not risk such another contretemps which might come on at any moment, even in the midst of the stages of evacuation. The larger craft when the wind turned northwards could be moved round to the south of the island, but the small craft must be protected. The Admiral therefore decided to run a large store-ship in close to the shore at right angles thereto, on the western side of the bay, and then sink her so that she should make a great breakwater behind which the small craft could shelter.

After the prompt ways of the Navy, a suitable store-ship—she happened to be brand-new—was ordered round to Kephalos, and boarded by the Admiral, who broke it to the "old man" what was about to happen to his vessel. The skipper was aghast. Never in all his experience had he heard of such a thing—the owner's—his position and all the rest of it! "Tut tut! An end to frivolous objec-

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tions! Your officers and crew must come ashore!" The bridge and the captain's cabin would remain above the water, and the old man might remain there with his steward. When the need was over the water would be pumped out and the vessel could go about her business.

Needs must when the Admiral drives, and the poor old man, aghast but acquiescent, gave the necessary orders. That evening she, a vessel of 7,000 or 8,000 tons, was put nicely down on an even keel, and exactly where she was wanted, and the little craft nestled under her wing like chickens to a rooster. The next day I went to have tea with the skipper, who was by then reconciled to his fate, saw the fun of it and demanded photographs of his eyrie above the waves. In due course the vessel was refloated without mishap and little the worse for her adventures.

THE REORGANIZATION OF COMMAND AND LEVANT BASE

Sir Charles Monro, with his two competent lieutenants, Generals Lynden Bell and Walter Campbell, was not merely to succeed Sir Ian Hamilton in command of the force on the Peninsula. Sir Ian had been "Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force," and now that force was to include the troops at Salonika. I myself was appointed Brigadier-General of the General Staff to the Corps at Anzac, but in view of the changes pending Sir William Birdwood did not want me there. Sir Charles Monro was to command two armies, with his Headquarters at Mudros—the Dardanelles Army, of which Birdwood was to assume the command with Headquarters on the island of Imbros, and the Salonika Army to be under Sir Bryan Mahon. I found myself appointed Deputy-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General of the Dardanelles Army at Mudros, while General Campbell

rejoined Sir Charles Monro, who was with General Lynden Bell, his C.G.S. at Lemnos, where they were endeavouring to form a Headquarters on shore at the little seacoast town of Kephalos, which could accommodate them for the impending winter, and abandon their temporary Headquarters in Mudros Harbour.

As Q. of the Dardanelles I was thus to have the carrying out of the movement of the evacuation which I had so long been pondering over, and which we had, as related, drawn up for Sir Charles Monro a few weeks earlier.

Before outlining our plan, which had been accepted as the basis, I will for a moment describe the new Levant Base in Egypt, to form which General Ellison had been despatched and which was part of the new system. It is a very important piece of organization, almost statesmanlike in its conception, little understood by the outer world, and in its last stages, owing to the change of conditions, an inconvenience.

It must be remembered that Egypt was a separate military command, situated in a country which had a very great power of producing supplies required by armies. The real base of the forces in Salonika and the Dardanelles was still Alexandria, the only port. The problem of evacuation of the Dardanelles had brought into prominence the question of another landing on Turkish shores. Neither Sir John Maxwell, nor the officer commanding at the base, could discriminate between the conflicting demands of various forces, when those demands required more stores of any kind than were available. But even had ample stores been apparently available, the base could not know the War Cabinet plans, and might send to Salonika stores needed for a reserve for some other purpose. Even had there been one Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean and one Quartermaster-General, operating stores, that would not have met the case of the War

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Cabinet's mentality and secret plans. Therefore the War Office decided to take the whole of the supplies of the Mediterranean into its own hands, giving its own instructions to its own officer, without any reference to the reason why. It was emphatically the only way out of the supply business at that time, and was entirely suitable. Instead of indenting on the War Office, the various forces would indent on the War Office's Egyptian Store at Alexandria. But because of his close touch with Egypt and its Government, Sir John Maxwell would act as the purchasing agent, though not as their disposer, of local supply.

Thus the War Office had its thumb on all supplies and could reserve or restrict for any secret purpose. When the need of this separate base had passed, it was abolished and merged in the system of the force in Egypt, Salonika having become a force with a base of its own.

Previous to the establishment of the base, the necessity of co-ordinating the accommodation for sick and wounded between Mudros, Egypt and the stations in the Mediterranean, had become urgent; General Babbie, V.C., a senior Medical Officer, was sent out to act on direct behalf of the War Office in the control of all Mediterranean hospital accommodation. That is to say, that the need for the central control of beds emerged before the need was recognized for other resources also. When the Levant Base was formed, General Babbie became a part of that Headquarters. That in brief is the story of the Levant Base, much misunderstood at the time by lesser administrative lights.

Among the lighter happenings at this time was the arrival at Kephilos of a Levantine contractor with a large staff of artistes and attendant dancers for the entertainment of the troops. But there was neither time nor room for such levities, and the austere

British moved him on to the more genial sphere of French control at Salonika. Apart from general undesirability, his party must necessarily have included enemy secret service agents.

PLANS FOR THE EVACUATION

In drawing up the plans for the evacuation, certain facts stood out as axiomatic. First that there must be a preliminary phase of uncertain duration, during which everything unessential that could be withdrawn should be got away. If we were not to stay the winter there was a lot of stuff on hand which we could do without at once, while there was also a lot of stuff that better knowledge now showed need never have been landed at all. All this could of course be abandoned if need be, but it was equipment of value, and as no one seemed to be in a hurry to make up their mind, it would be as well to begin to bring this away in the empty "G" ships that were landing stores.

It was also obvious that there would be a stage at which no more troops could be withdrawn until the last phase, when heavy enemy attacks might be expected. That is to say, there would be a stage during which many troops could come off, and that there would be a fighting residuum, almost of the nature of storm troops, who must come away all together. Further, it must be accepted that while we would get away our earlier wounded, there would be a phase in which wounded must be abandoned, and therefore we must be prepared to leave behind us equipped and staffed ambulances or provisional stationary hospitals, with food and water, in which the Turks would no doubt allow the wounded to be treated and those still out to be taken. We suggested this might amount to 2,000.

The casual observer felt sure that the Turks from

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their commanding heights looking down on the beaches would note that we were taking stores away. My view was otherwise. As regards night, removals would of course not be noticed, while by day the rise and fall of derricks was continually in progress with drowsy repetition on a dozen ships all along the beaches. I felt that it would be a very sharp man who would spot that some of the derricks came up with loads instead of down with them, and that even if he did, he would not infer much therefrom.

We were ordered to work to the following data, viz. that the whole of the force would remain to the end except two of the thirteen British divisions, two-thirds of the British Artillery, and all the French, who would all go at some previous stage.

The General Staff told us that the remaining force to be removed would then be :

Helles	.	.	35,000 men and 80 guns.
Anzac	.	.	40,000 men and 74 guns.
Suvla	.	.	49,000 men and 56 guns.

And that the actual force which must remain as a minimum till actual definite orders to come away were issued, must be :

Helles	.	.	.	.	.	21,000
Anzac	.	.	.	.	.	31,000
Suvla	.	.	.	.	.	40,000

This meant that we could get away 32,000 men in a preliminary stage, but that 73,000 must remain and be brought away under high pressure.

We proposed that the withdrawal should be in three stages :

- (a) Preliminary.
- (b) Intermediate.
- (c) Final.

The Preliminary Stage was to be of indefinite duration, during which troops, animals and stores not required for a defensive winter campaign should go. It would include all troops required for rest, non-essential animals, damaged guns, surplus rifles and ammunition, and stores not essential for a defensive fight. This stage could be treated and spoken of as a removal for Salonika, as already done in reality with the 10th Division.

The Intermediate Stage would be that in which troops and guns not essential for the tactical withdrawal could go, and we put this stage at four days.

The Final Stage would be actual tactical withdrawing of the essential unencumbered fighting troops, who might, if need be, abandon one-third of their guns. These were to be merely marching men with arms, equipment, blankets and ground sheets.

We recommended that each stage should be independent, and capable of being prolonged if need be without throwing the next stage out of gear. Each stage was to be worked in independent blocks, and no stage would commence without a definite order. No great harm would thus ensue if a bout of bad weather intervened between two stages. But it was recognized that if bad weather came in the middle of the final stage, it might be a very serious matter.

We further postulated that every transport in the Mediterranean must converge on Mudros fully equipped with water, and that the mass of the troops must be taken on board from the carriers and small craft in which they left the beaches and be sent away to Egypt or elsewhere, and that there would be no time to get them off at Mudros. At least 45,000 men must be received on board ship at once.

We of course emphasized the importance of stopping all further piling of men and stores on to the Peninsula.

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Section 4 of our plan showed that the troops could be received as follows :

At Imbros, 16,000.

At Mudros, 44,000, extensible for very short periods to 50,000.

On transports, 45,000.

On transports returning to us after taking the first removals, 19,000.

We attached four tables :

- I. Programme of withdrawal in the Intermediate Stage.
- II. Programme of withdrawal in the Final Stage.
- III. Ultimate disposal of troops.
- IV. Outline of tentative scheme for withdrawal of wounded.

By this time the three Army Corps and the work on their beaches was very highly organized. Soon after General Altham's arrival, he pressed that the beaches, really the advanced bases, should be placed under his control. In theory this was obviously right, for the fighting commands should not be bothered with such matters, and it was done. The beaches were the head of each advanced branch of the communications. But in practice these particular advanced bases were also part of the fighting front. The Corps Commanders were obviously much too closely involved to keep away from the business. So before long my Chief agreed to their returning to Corps control, by which time we had fitted them out with a proper administrative Staff and sufficient Military Landing Officers. The beaches however, when we took control, were sadly in want of proper management. Labour and water discipline were their chief trouble, in fact labour generally had been neglected in the force. When we got some together, the labourers required careful handling to get

them to work under shell-fire. At first the outbreak of a fit of Turkish rage would send them flying to their shelters, but this was eventually overcome.

For instance, at Suvla the Commandant had it so arranged that no one should break off until a gong was beaten at his command post. He was to be the judge of when shelter was necessary, which was a substantial triumph of mind over matter, and the lesser breeds who laboured. This commandant, I might mention, was a much shot-over officer from France, sent to us as a nice quiet place for officers needing rest and light duty. Major W. Alexander, D.S.O., of the Connaught Rangers, was almost the sole survivor of his battalion with the original Expeditionary Force in France. And he was sent to us for rest. He found it in command of the shell-swept beaches of Suvla Bay. Later some clever administrator thought a Mesopotamian summer was evidently what the doctor had ordered for him, and out he came to me there, a staunch, enduring and battered veteran of great heart.

By the time of the planning of the evacuation, not only were the Corps Staffs well organized, but they had all their fronts under control, and their Divisional Staffs were equally efficient, and we felt that if a clear plan was given them, they would be able to elaborate the evacuation detail with a good prospect of success.

A DRAMATIC CONFERENCE

While we were waiting for the decision, I took part in what has always seemed to me a most dramatic conference. Admiral De Robeck had been sent for to the Admiralty to discuss the future, and Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss was temporarily in Command. The Naval Chief of the Staff was Commodore Roger Keyes. They felt, the latter especially so, the tragedy

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and the pity of letting go hold of the Peninsula after all we had gone through. One more bid was what they wanted. They were prepared, as Winston Churchill had been, to run great risks and suffer heavy losses with their obsolescent fleet. The Navy would attack the Dardanelles and try and force the Narrows itself. They had in their minds that a sufficiently resolute attack, regardless of loss, had not yet been tried, forgetting perhaps that what was thought impossible six months before was not likely to be easier now with all the time the Turk had had to thrice bar the door. They were full of enthusiasm and a thirst for higher endeavour, so they came to Sir William Birdwood. What share would he be prepared to take in so gallant an enterprise ?

It was a stirring scene. We met in Sir William's hut in the new Headquarter Camp, to which we had moved from Sir Ian's sand-swept site. It was a small wooden hutlet, and a miserable place compared with an Admiral's luxurious quarters, and it fitly denoted the state the Army was in. Sir William and Sir Rosslyn sat at the table ; Commodore Keyes, myself and Colonel Aspinall, stood by. On the tables were the maps and charts. Keyes eagerly explained their sense of shame at the idea of abandoning the enterprise. They had asked leave to attack with the fleet ; might he say we would support him and that we agreed ?

Admiral Wemyss, with his chin on his hand, stared at the chart gravely, nodding as Keyes made his points. Now and again Sir William asked a question, as if playing for time—time to think what he could do and what it all meant. He got up and walked across to the great military map of the Peninsula, now squared and numbered, and ever as we sat a Turkish plane whirled above us.

It was impressive enough, these two strong men

who could not bear to own that we were beaten. Sir William looked from one to the other.

"If you decide to carry out this plan of yours, if the Cabinet sanctions it, you shall rely on the very best support the Army can give you, but I warn you the troops are not the troops of the first landing. They are not even the troops of Suvla Bay and Anzac. They have lost their best men, they have lost their best officers. They are weak with dysentery. But you shall have our best endeavours. It won't be what I should like to give you, and I don't think that it will be sufficient to give you a fair chance of success."

Those who know Birdwood will know how it must have cut him to have nothing better to say. And he looked across at Aspinall and myself. And we nodded back at him, for we knew his words were those of a wise man. The Army was not fit to do itself any measure of justice.

"Well," said Wemyss, "I shall put it to the Cabinet that you are prepared to give your support, your best support, and we will leave it at that."

"Also," added Birdwood, "I am under Sir Charles Monro's orders. So that the free decision even is not with me."

And then the sailormen were exceedingly sorrowful, and rolled up their charts and walked away.

And that was the end of it, for the Cabinet would not hear of it now. We heard after that almost every captain in the fleet had expressed disagreement as to the possibility of the operation. But then they were not all Roger Keyes.

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I have related how much time elapsed between the drawing up of our plans of evacuation, which Sir Charles generally accepted, and the receipt of any orders to

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put them into effect, and how all the while we were feverishly pushing on shore the compulsory winter supplies while taking away surplus stores.

We were, however, naturally ordered to put the Preliminary Stage into effect and remove everything not required for a defensive winter operation, and this went on steadily. Further orders tarried. Then came the Blizzard, Mr. Bonar Law's memorandum, and the long-delayed decision. On December 7th came the orders, and, while Sir William Birdwood had instructed his three Corps Commanders as to general plans, and they themselves had the matter turned over in their own minds, it was not till December 10th that we at the Dardanelles Headquarters were able to issue the detailed orders. These orders directed the Intermediate Stage to be put into effect forthwith and stated that the Final Stage would, it was expected, be ordered for the 19th and 20th December.

The decision, however, had only been to evacuate Suvla and Anzac. The Naval Commander-in-Chief had said that, if Helles was abandoned, he would find it difficult to dominate the Straits and the egress. So for the moment the Cabinet yielded, for human nature loves two bites at a cherry.

THE MIDNIGHT FLIT

And then the Army fled from the Peninsula, flitted as a tenant flits by night with his rent unpaid, and did it extremely well, so that the ranks of Tusculum could scarce forbear to cheer. On the morning of December 21st the Turks looked down as before on the meagre beaches, to which the British had been clinging by their eyelids. And every Turk had said to himself, "Aha! my boys! My fair-haired Saxon *rayas*! You wait till the winter. January and February Pasha will put it across you as we put it across the Russians before."

But the beaches were strangely silent. Something had been happening in the night, they knew, but they had not believed it possible that the long lines were empty and greatly feared a trap.

And this is the story of it. The Intermediate Stage went on quietly but intensively enough from December 10th onward. By day the derricks of the "G" ships merely rose and fell in their normal dreamy way, but by night orderly echelons of men either embarked themselves or slung the surplus guns and stores aboard. From sunset to sunrise the military landing officers and their parties sweated and shoved and lifted, and just to make it easier now and again Sergeant Osman with the big gun at Gaba Tepe would sling a handful of shrapnel along the Anzac beaches, or just by way of routine a *rafale* would sweep the shores of Suvla Bay, and all the while the work went on.

In our Headquarters at Imbros, we held our breaths and received each day the reports of what had left. Every day the carriers discharged their men into waiting transports, and stores into store-ships, and they slipped away ostensibly to Salonika, but in reality to add to the jigsaw puzzle on the quays of Alexandria, so that the gossiping Mudros foreshore had little knowledge of the passing and flitting.

A small destroyer, built for the Italians, was at the disposal of the Staff, and would shimmy us over to the beaches from Imbros, 10 miles to Anzac, a little more to Suvla or Helles, so that we could consult daily with the Staffs of the Corps. To keep in touch with the Q. Staff was essential and to hear their difficulties and grouses, which however were few enough. The Naval arrangements were up to time, and more elastic, so that there were no hitches. I always found the Corps Commanders on their perches, and their "Q" men content. Each morning as the daily reports came in we sent a soothing wire off to Sir Charles

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Monro's Headquarters, and our Army Commander flitted over to each beach to see that all was well and ease his own nerves. To a Commander to wait while the Staff tell you all is well and try and shoo you away is no easy matter. It is not every one who can fish while the crisis supervenes. It was once my lot to serve the most tiresome devil the Army has ever pupped, and it took all my ingenuity to keep him from spoiling things by monkeying with the machine. I had a difficult time, but one day I realized that he knew. For at dinner with a higher commander I heard him say, "My nerve is getting pretty bad, I know, but then MacMunn comes and says, 'Don't be a silly old fool,' and I keep quiet, or try to." It was very human, and I did not believe he was human till I heard that.

However, the Staffs kept their Commanders quiet and gave them tidy little jobs to do which would occupy their minds, and all went more than regularly. Bitter messages came from G.H.Q. of the higgledy-piggledy way in which the stores were being loaded, but the nights were dark and they could not use lights and that d——d Sergeant Osman with his shrapnel was a bit disturbing, so I pacified higher authority with soft words, but I should have liked to have said, "Shut up! You are lucky to have us off at all."

And then came the real crisis. By December 19th we had, according to programme, taken off the 18,000 men of the preliminary stage and the two-thirds of the artillery and the stores of the intermediate stage, and now we had but the bare fighting and marching troops left.

The Turk apparently had not an inkling. At night a routine bombardment went on, training the enemy to look on it as normal, so that we could keep it up till the last moment. Many devices to deceive

were evolved, which kept the troops occupied and happy. The usual daytime *strafes* were neither increased nor diminished.

The afternoon of the 19th wore on, and excitement in the Corps and at Imbros was great. Our Staff were glued to the telephones for every item of news. Not a sound, nor a sigh, nor a leaf out of place. Then, as dusk came on, out slipped the transports and the carriers from Mudros and from Kephalos Bay, the tugs and the barges, the silent black beetles, each to their rendezvous. As the night passed we could see the usual evening guns blare out in the sky, and, as the small hours drew near, the craft slipped away with their burdens, troops, guns, mules, stores piled high on their decks, in happy confusion. The night before the last was safely over, and in the morning things looked as usual. The trenches seemed as active as ever. The men were thinner, the guns were fewer, but no one noticed it, so good had been the camouflage. Our hopes were rising. Could it be possible that we should bilk the Turk and get away scot-free ? Hardly ! and now was the crisis. A bare ten thousand men, the fittest and most active it is true, but a bare ten thousand on each beach stood before the masses of Turks.

During the daytime of the 20th suppressed excitement was intense. If the telephone from the beaches rang at all, we jumped. Two o'clock all quiet, three o'clock, not a sound ! Four o'clock, have some tea ! Five o'clock, get the vessels ready to slip across ! Dusk had come, and once again the craft crept out from their rendezvous to their allotted beaches.

The moon was waning, but the last night was still bright. The sea was like glass. "If you don't help me, don't help the bar !" But we *were* being helped almost for the first time since the start of the expedition. The stars in their courses were doing a bit for John

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Bull. A bright moon, a glassy sea and a light fog, which did not hamper us but made the whole sea invisible. Nothing could have been better.

The Chief was on a small cruiser and I and one of my Staff slipped over in the little destroyer and alternated between Anzac and Suvla. The great *massif* of Sari Bair towered above us, and now and again could be seen through a gap in the fog which lay low and only close to the shore. As we went over we watched the routine guns flare out as they had done at intervals for many nights before, and we could also see the flare of the answering Turkish cannon. It was a ghostly scene. The loaded small craft coming away from the beaches to the carriers and transports were like the flitter of duck o' night on a lagoon. It was like punting off the Essex coast, or on the Broads, cool but not cold, while the hours passed slowly in the come and go of ghostly hulls. How quiet the vessels were! Hardly a shout, and only now and then a megaphone boomed. Now the craft came more and more frequently. The storm troops were coming away! Those who had held the trenches to the last. Not a hitch! Oh, well done Corps and Divisional Staffs!

Then came four o'clock. Night was nearly over. No wounded! The medical parties which were to have stayed were being withdrawn.

High up on the cliffs above Anzac the Dominion troops had piled all their surplus high explosive in a mine under the Turkish trenches. Connected by wire, it was to be fired as the Corps Commander and the last of the covering party came off. With everything away Sir Alexander Godley gave the sign and we on the water saw a huge flash which lit up the whole sky above the heights, and even the sea seemed to shake. Then such a terror seized the Turkish line. The British were on them! And every gun and rifle

broke out along their Anzac front. While we in the ships laughed long and contentedly.

At Suvla the last party had slipped over without a sign, and only set fire to a surplus dump of food and stores. And what was the end of that ? Suvla and Anzac were over, and once again *sic transit gloria mundi*. How flat it seemed for the moment as our destroyer sped back to Kephalos. There I was in time to see the tired and thankful men of the 13th Division come ashore, come ashore to find a loaf of bread and a tin of hot Maconachie from Soyer stoves between every two shoved into their hands by men of a Veteran Battalion, which my A.Q.M.G. had organized. That went straight to the Guardsman heart of Stanley Maude, the Divisional Commander, for with Guardsmen the care of their men is a ruling passion.

A little later he came up to my hut and had a shave, and there we laid that bond of friendship and trust which enabled me later to play up to him so in Mesopotamia.

CHAPTER XI

HELLES, EGYPT AND SINAI

THE SECOND BITE AT THE CHERRY

CONGRATULATIONS poured in from all and sundry, and the Cabinet breathed again. Off most of the Peninsula for one casualty ! with no guns abandoned except a few obsolete pieces such as the five-inch howitzer, some stores destroyed, and perhaps six weeks' food. The Turks, when we were gone, hurried down to the Suvla trenches and endeavoured to save the burning stores, but the cruisers made this unpleasant and shelled the abandoned and smouldering dumps.

I venture to give below the letter my late Chief, Sir Edward Altham, wrote me, a man who had made the administration and movement of an Army his life-study. For it is one of the few things that I think my son may like to have after me. Here also is what the Germans said, for all their chagrin at our escape :

"The British evacuation of the Ari Burnu and Ana fronts (Suvla and Anzac) will stand before the eyes of all strategists of retreat as a hitherto quite unattainable masterpiece." (*Vossische Zeitung*, Jan. 21st, 1916.)

MUDROS,
December 21st.

MY DEAR MACMUNN,—

I cannot congratulate you too warmly on the perfect Staff work of the evacuation. Things are seldom per-

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fect, least of all in war, but no other adjective could truthfully be employed to describe the work of you and Aspinall and the Corps Staffs on this occasion. The feat will be regarded as a classic example for military students to learn from for the next hundred years.

The results have been a great relief to everyone here, and evidently to the Government at Home, and I hope for sure that all your people will get the fullest recognition. You will like, I think, to hear that the C.-in-Chief (Sir Charles Monro) had up Wetherall and Erskine Murray yesterday and complimented them in generous terms for the work they did here, a compliment they fully merited.

Best of luck and speedy advancement to you ;
. . . your backers will be many in the future.

E. A. ALTHAM.

With no British at Suvla and Anzac, it was thought that the Turk might give Helles a little extra attention, and the unfortunate 13th Division, on which the mantle of the 29th was in some sort falling, was hurried back to the Peninsula again. I can't say that the rank and file were pleased thereat. In this connection I had to deal with a case of a man tried and sentenced for desertion. He had, it was alleged, reported sick, been seen by the doctor, and ordered to duty, such duty being the re-embarkation for service on the Peninsula. The principal witness was the Medical Officer. The man was found guilty and sentenced to death. The case came to me before going to the Army Commander. I did not like it, so I sent an officer to carry out a special inquiry. The result was that it was discovered that the Medical Officer was not at all sure, and in fact the accused was *not* the man. He had been absent from causes that were quite free of any intention to avoid a dangerous duty.

It was not possible to break the Medical Officer, as I should have liked to have done, but I was able to make him smell hell pretty usefully for ten minutes or so, and I am quite certain he will not swear a man's life away in a hurry again.

Just before the evacuation, another pitiful case passed through my hands. A sergeant of a battalion on the Peninsula had been sentenced to death for cowardice of a very pronounced nature. Had the sentence of death passed on him been carried out then and there, well and good. But only the Commander-in-Chief could confirm it, and it was obviously not a case for a deferred sentence, which had not then, as a matter of fact, come into general use. But the Chief had gone over to Salonika, which was then under his command. The condemned man, whose sentence, of course, was not known, had been living in a guard tent chatting with the guard for, I think, a fortnight, when orders came that the sentence had been confirmed and it was to be carried out forthwith.

I often think of that poor wretch sitting in that tent for a couple of weeks and then being taken out and shot, and wonder if I should have pressed on my Army Commander to refer it back for re-consideration. The orders were peremptory, and we were just in the throes of getting the evacuation going. But I wonder . . .

The period immediately succeeding the evacuation was a restful one for us at Headquarters. The strain for the moment was over. I was in our new Headquarters on the island, and my little stone hut was by an autumnal bracken glade, beside a little clump of English bramble and wild rose, close to a small stream. It was very pleasant and peaceful, and one would have liked to do a rest cure there for some time.

At Helles all was quiet, and one realized that, whatever the wisdom of staying there, it would have

complicated the machinery had we to carry out my Committee's scheme in full, viz. the evacuation of the three beaches simultaneously. But it could have been done.

We had a pleasant Christmas on the island, but about dinner-time a Bosch plane came over, dropping a bomb over the Mess, which killed one of our batmen, and which they had the impertinence to wrap up in a Christmas stocking.

The Cabinet soon cheered up sufficiently to see that there was no real reason to leave anyone on the Peninsula at all, and on January 3rd, Sir Charles Monro's advice to come away from there too was accepted. It was hardly likely that we should catch the Turks napping a second time, and it was also a fair chance that we had lost the opportunity, and that the weather would break up. But we had now ample experience before us. A similar scheme was drawn up and put into action just the same way. Apparently the Turks were about to molest us, though not with any idea of stopping an evacuation or inflicting loss on us while going. It was merely an operation against us, and they were found to be in force with fixed bayonets in their trenches without apparently the driving force to bring it off. A counter-attack from our trenches let any remnant of zeal ooze out.

Sir Stanley Maude was the last man to embark, and nearly got left behind, so much so that there was some anxiety, for the wind was rising and the sea was getting up. The young officers had some jest about "Come into the lighter, Maude, we're tired of waiting alone."

But all came well, and British and French got away as successfully as the 9th and Anzac Corps had done. No casualties occurred, though a Turkish submarine had appeared; but the weather broke up, and the final night, that of January 8th, was the last perhaps

on which the operation could have been possible. So ended the Great Adventure, which might better be called the Great Folly, and may God rest the souls of those gallant gentlemen who came not away with us.

A few days after, General Birdwood and all his Staff moved down to Egypt, where we were broken up. It pleased His Majesty to make some immediate rewards in advance of despatches to a few of those concerned in the evacuation, and to my surprise and pleasure I found myself a Companion of the Bath, and also an Officier of the Légion d'Honneur at the hands of the French Commander-in-Chief. As in the old days of Burma, my reward was an "immediate one," a rarity which has more value in a soldier's eyes than those that come as the fruit of despatches. One's real reward lay in seeing those divisions snatched from the burning of the wretched Gallipoli beaches, and restored in the climate of Egypt to health and equipment.

Looking through what I have written, I see that I have not dwelt as I should on all the Navy did for the Army. Sir Ian said truly that they were our father and our mother, and so they were, so far as zeal and gallantry went. The evacuation was their masterpiece, and all through the co-operation between the Services was a remarkable thing. The fact that they were not fitted by knowledge or organization, or even imagination, to cope with the administrative commercial work of a port is not disparagement on the premier fighting Service of the world; it is but a reflection on those who thought a lifetime of war training would enable them to do without training a different job which had taken other men also a lifetime to learn. But then that was the fault of the Cabinet, and everyone else, excepting always my wisest of masters, Sir John Cowans, the Quartermaster-General to the

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Forces not only from the beginning to the end of the World War itself but for two years of intensive preparation.

SINAI AND THE DEFENCE OF EGYPT

The Mediterranean Expeditionary Force Headquarters and the Dardanelles Army was transferred to Egypt to undertake the Defence of the Canal. To understand what was happening, it is necessary to glance at the situation in Egypt since the outbreak of war in the first instance, and the coming into the War of Turkey in October, 1914.

The British Garrison in Egypt in August, 1914, was a small one, under the command of Major-General the Hon. J. Byng. So long as Turkey was not against us, the immediate problem lay in preventing any attempt to block the Canal and to protect its extremities against hostile acts. The British occupation of Egypt allowed of our securing these objects without any sinister breach of neutrality. The securing of the Canal was a vital matter for the Allies, and how to do so would, without the fact of the occupation, have been a serious problem. As Turkey was not yet against us, some little time was available, and the measure of drawing on India, as old as 1801, was adopted, first the divisions *en route* for France arriving, followed by a garrison for Egypt. To this country Lord Kitchener sent also a Territorial Division, the 42nd, to continue its training, knowing that he could divert it elsewhere when required. These moves enabled him to recall the regular garrison as a help towards the five new Regular Divisions, which alone could reinforce Sir John French at this early stage of development. These transfers were made before Turkey joined the Central Powers, but not before the news of preparations in Syria with a view to threatening the Canal and invading Egypt was already coming to

hand. When in October Turkey joined the War against the Allies, reports of an invasion of Egypt became more prevalent.

Egypt, however, was already becoming a *place d'armes* for the forces of the British Empire. The Indian troops were the only fully-trained forces, but the 42nd was improving, and now the large Australian contingent, as yet but little trained and only partially equipped, were brought to this climate that was congenial to them rather than to complete their training in a British winter. The sight of these thousands of Europeans removed any desire on the part of the Egyptian people, if ever they possessed it, to side with their former suzerain. But the effective force as yet was low, and resources in artillery and ancillary services were small, in view of the call of France for every available form of assistance. The unmilitary device of using the Canal itself as a line of defence had perforce to be adopted. Already had mines appeared in the Canal, dropped apparently by neutral ships, happily without serious effect, and in February, 1915, a considerable Turkish Force, under the redoubtable Kress Von Kressenstein, actually reached the Canal and attacked at several places, of which the main attempt was close to Tussum, south of the Bitter Lakes. The Indian Force succeeded in repulsing this attack, destroying to a man the small body who had crossed in pontoons to the Egyptian side. The Turks, who had expected a rising in Egypt to assist them, vanished to their base at Beersheba as suddenly as they had come, but continued their railway preparations in Syria and across the desert from Beersheba.

The attack on the Dardanelles, however, called for all the resistance the Turks could make, and for the moment prevented anything more serious than mine-dropping. But it was realized that the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula must mean another and far

more serious threat to Egypt. Germany had long realized that this was the "jugular vein" of the British Empire, and therefore of the Allied system. Much of the delay in coming to the decision to evacuate the Peninsula was due to the representations from many quarters of the effect that it would have on Egypt and the East, and a desire existed to make an attack on Turkey elsewhere. But there were neither transport resources equal to the suggested landing at Alexandria, nor were the divisions from the Dardanelles fit in health or equipment for any immediate operations. Dysentery and the unhealthy life in those cooped-up trenches, with no rest camps behind as in France, unfitted them for any early operations. The first troops for the Peninsula had left most of their animals, wheels and harness in Egypt, and the latter formations had come out without any marching stuff. They needed a deal of refitting before they could be restored to the fighting order of battle. The work done by the R.A.O.C. at Alexandria, in sorting out the mass of equipment in a beastly state thrown into an *olla podrida* of mixed stores by the evacuation, was prodigious.

When Lord Kitchener left the Dardanelles he proceeded to examine the problem of the Defence of Egypt, which the evacuation must inevitably bring to an acute stage. Since more active operations were not possible for some time, he decided that a position several miles east of the Canal, which would give some depth of manœuvre, would alone serve as a line of defence against a serious attack. "Up to now," he is reported to have said, "the Canal has been defending Egypt; Egypt must now defend the Canal," which put the situation in a nutshell.

To work at entrenching in the pure air of the desert, in the wonderful months of December, January and February, with no harassments and with proper food,

B.S.M.W.

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would put that Army into fighting trim once more. It was exactly "what the doctor ordered." But to take up this line actually selected by General Horne on behalf of Lord Kitchener involved a very remarkable amount of work and preparation, which has never been realized by the world at large, and has been forgotten in the more dramatic story of the advance across Sinai to Ghaza. But it was a remarkable and scientific undertaking.

The line of defence had not only to be taken up and entrenched, but a series of light railways, tramways, cart roads and water pipes had to be laid straight out from the Canal into the desert, to maintain the troops in their camps. This demanded an immense amount of labour and material. The public services of Egypt were co-opted to the work. Hundreds of sailing *dahabiehs* from the Nile and the coastwise lakes were brought into the Canal to carry metalling stone from Sinai and supplies from Port Said. The trenches flung out into the desert needed reveting material lest they silt up daily from the friable nature of the soil and the whispering wind among the sand dunes. A huge factory of revetment hurdles was established in Port Said, and tens of thousands were hurried along the Canal and carried out on camels.

But drinking water, as at Gallipoli, was the big trouble, and once again Mother Nile gave the supply. The solution of the problem was the precursor of the wonderful feat of Sir Archibald Murray's engineers in taking the Nile water across the desert to Palestine and the River of Egypt. The Sweetwater Canal, it is true, ran alongside the Egyptian bank of the great canal, but of all misnomers this was perhaps the greatest. "Sweet," as distinct from salt, it certainly was, but foul with the foulness of many riparian villages, and, worst of all, full of the horrible parasite *Bilharzia*, known to Atkins as "Bill Harris."

Every few miles this "sweet" water was led into large brick filters erected on the Egyptian side, and across the canal by syphons, and was then pumped through ten miles or so of pipes to the trenches.¹

The number of divisions rescued from Gallipoli thus assembling in Sinai or Egypt was very great, viz. the 11th, 13th, 29th, 42nd, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, four Australian Divisions, the Yeomanry Mounted Division, of which only a portion were rehorsed, Cox's Indian Brigade, and two fresh divisions sent out from France, the 31st and the 46th.

The number is somewhat indicative of the seriousness with which the Turko-German threat to the Canal was now regarded.

It is this period which illustrates the value of Egypt as a huge *place d'armes* to the British Empire, from whence, as the crisis appeared less imminent, the divisions from Gallipoli, re-equipped and restored in health, were swept off to more urgent theatres of war. Sir Archibald Murray, for some little time C.I.G.S. at the War Office, now took over from Sir Charles Monro the command of the M.E.F.; Sir Charles, having completed the task of evacuation for which he had been sent, returned to France. General Birdwood's Headquarters, that of the Dardanelles Army, was broken up, and the troops for the defence of the Canal grouped into two Army Corps, of which the Northern Corps was commanded by General Horne, to whose Headquarters I was posted as Deputy-Adjutant and Quarter-master-General. Our Headquarters were at Port Said and Battle Headquarters at Balla Gare on the Canal. Four busy weeks were spent on the Canal,

¹ The defence preparations of the Canal, which are of value as a military and administrative study, are described at some length in the volume on Egypt and Sinai which I have contributed to the *Official History of the War*.

during which we got the section organized and began to push out along "the Way of the Philistines" from El Qantara towards Romani, the move which aimed at denying the water-bearing area in the old Pelusiac channel of the Nile to the enemy, and which led to the affair of Qatia where the Yeomanry were scooped, and to the desert battle of Romani, when the energetic Kress made his last Turkish offensive on this front. It was an area teeming with remains of the past from Roman settlements to Napoleonic watch towers, and the digging troops often turned up relics.

Those who would study the strategy of Empire and of a world which cannot afford to forget, will do well to reflect on the remarkable centre that Egypt presented to the Allies. Something like twelve British Divisions¹ were recouping or assembling here after the evacuation of Gallipoli, and as soon as the danger to Egypt had passed, and the debilitated troops were recouped, they were redistributed to the corners of the world, leaving sufficient to hold the line till such time as Imperial strategy was ready for the campaign in Syria.

THE SENUSSI TROUBLE

But while we were refitting the troops from the Dardanelles, a trouble arose which had long been threatening Sir John Maxwell, and which was one of the squibs that the Proclamation of Jihad, a War of Islam against the infidel, had alone succeeded in lighting. Away in the Western deserts "The Senussi" had long held sway. For years we had heard officers from the Soudan talk of this panjandrum of the North African deserts, a greater than the Mahdi, who could light a conflagration beside which the Mahdi's rise would be but a garden bonfire.

¹ See *Official History of the War*, "Egypt and Palestine," Chap. VI.

But the Senussi was a "religious," who dwelt on holiness more than dominion; nevertheless, it was felt that holy men could often summon spirits from the deep that they could not control. England and France, and of late Italy, as well as Egypt, had always kept a watchful eye on what the holy one from the Jebel Senussi might stand for. The Turks hoped for great things, and sent him money, decorations, arms and a Staff officer or two. Maxwell and McMahon in Egypt had kept him fairly wise, and it was not till the evacuation of Gallipoli was coming about that the Senussi, or as some called him "The Grand Senussi," let a flame be lit. From it resulted one of the most arduous little side-shows of the type in which the British regular officer most excels. Some of the troops from the Peninsula found themselves wafted away to this difficult campaign, and for some time fear of the desert kept a Western Force in being, as well as the Eastern Force on the Canal.

General Peyton, who had brought the Yeomanry Division to Egypt and to Suvla, finally disposed of this trouble, and as that torch died out, all hope of fanatical Islam as a factor in the World War passed away.

I was not, however, myself destined to see more of Egypt and Sinai, for an order came appointing me Inspector-General of Communications in Mesopotamia, followed by a letter from Sir John Cowans saying that I should find things in a sad mess there behind the front, and that I should have his full support and any assistance I might ask for, and with that at one's back a job was worth tackling. So I took my leave of the 15th Corps and sailed away on a tramp with a squadron of Herts Yeomanry and a Mule Corps bound for the Gulf and the Tigris, where I arrived ten days before the Fall of Kut.

THE KING'S PAWNS

But before I take the story to the Tigris and the Rivers of the South, of the Psalmist, I must tell in brief a story which I have told at greater length in *Maga*, and which was told to me up the Nile when lunching with Mr. James Breasted, Professor of History at the Pennsylvania University, and Mr. Oscar Straus, sometime United States Minister at Constantinople. The story they said had been told them at the Turkish capital by a Turkish officer who was present. I have called it "The King's Pawns," and I had the privilege of telling it myself to His Majesty. It is enough to "touch strong men's hearts with glory till they weep," and this is how it ran. During the watch and ward on the Sinai Desert, the Turkish Headquarters and German Staff were at Beersheba, at the foot of the road to Hebron. To this place was brought a patrol of an Indian Regiment, Moslems probably of the Punjab, captured out in front of the British line, consisting of a *havildar* and three sepoys. They were brought before an officer of the German *General Stab*. Through an interpreter he demanded of them:

"You are Moslems? Yet you fight against the Caliph of Islam. Have you not heard that he has proclaimed a holy war and summoned all the faithful to his assistance?"

The *havildar* thought awhile, and then said:

"Sahib, we have heard, and we have thought of that, but this is a political and not a religious war."

The German answered: "I don't care a damn about that. Here are four Turkish uniforms, and unless you get into them at once you will be shot as traitors to the Caliph."

Said the *havildar*: "May I speak alone with my comrades for a minute?"

"March them out," cried the German.

In five minutes they were marched in again.

"Well ?" said the officer, with a frown, "have you decided ?"

And the *havildar* drew himself up and called :

"Three cheers for King George!"

And they were taken out and shot.

CHAPTER XII

BASRA AND THE TWO RIVERS

SUEZ TO THE SHATT-EL-ARAB

IT was a peaceful enough voyage free of life-belts after the troubled Ægean, and with ten days' fairly uncomfortable steaming we arrived at Koweit at the head of the Persian Gulf, and ran into the first of the many Mesopotamian difficulties. At the mouth of the Shatt-El-Arab, the joint Tigris and Euphrates, was a bar of mud, and even at high tide only ships of 19-ft. draught could swish over it. As we drew 23 feet we should have to trans-ship and a British India steamer was waiting for the purpose.

While the trans-shipping was in progress I landed at Koweit, which was the usual desert town of stone set in mud, with a few whitewashed houses. Far down on the horizon to the West I was shown the land where Ibn Saud, now the holder of Mecca, lived at Riyadh in the oasis of Nejd, whose remarkable personality and career was even then famous, and who in his antipathy to the Turk was only too anxious to come down on the British side of the fence.

During the night we slipped away to the bar, to find ourselves waiting patiently for the tide, as morning broke with low flats on either bow, and in the distance, on our left, the few palm trees and cable station at Fao. A mile or so below it stood the ruins of the Turkish fort, bombarded and captured in the first occupation of Basra ¹

¹ Properly pronounced Busra (like the 'bus of omnibus) and not Basra (to rhyme with Jazz).

in the autumn of 1914, now lying dismantled with its old Krupp guns pointing skyward.

After crossing the bar the broad vista of the Shatt-El-Arab, which now had a depth of 26 feet, stretched before us.

After 45 miles of palm gardens, we came abreast of Abadan, and the works of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, at the end of their pipe-line over 200 miles long, which brings their oil down from the fields in Persia to their refineries on the Shatt-El-Arab.

Soon after Abadan comes the Persian town of Muhammerah, the capital and residence of our very good friend Sheikh Khazal, whose palace stands on the river bank where the Karun River from the hills of Persia joins the Shatt-El-Arab. It is as well to remember that the left bank of the Shatt to a short distance above Muhammerah is Persian territory, the country between the river and the hills being known as Arabistan, in the possession of the tributary Sheikh of Muhammerah. It was here that the force under General Sir James Outram landed in 1857 and defeated the Persian forces, as well as at Bushire.

A few miles above Muhammerah came the passage which the German Consul-General had endeavoured to block at the beginning of the War by sinking the considerable steamer *Ekbatana*, one small vessel, and a lightship, in the fair-way. Fortunately the current had been too much for them, and the hulks swung out of position and still left a navigable channel. As we passed only masts and smoke-stack were visible, and the vessels were slowly settling down into the mud.

Twenty miles above Muhammerah we steamed into the crowded port of Basra, and anchored off Ashar, the riverside town, Basra itself being a mile and a half inland up a tidal creek. As we entered the anchorage,

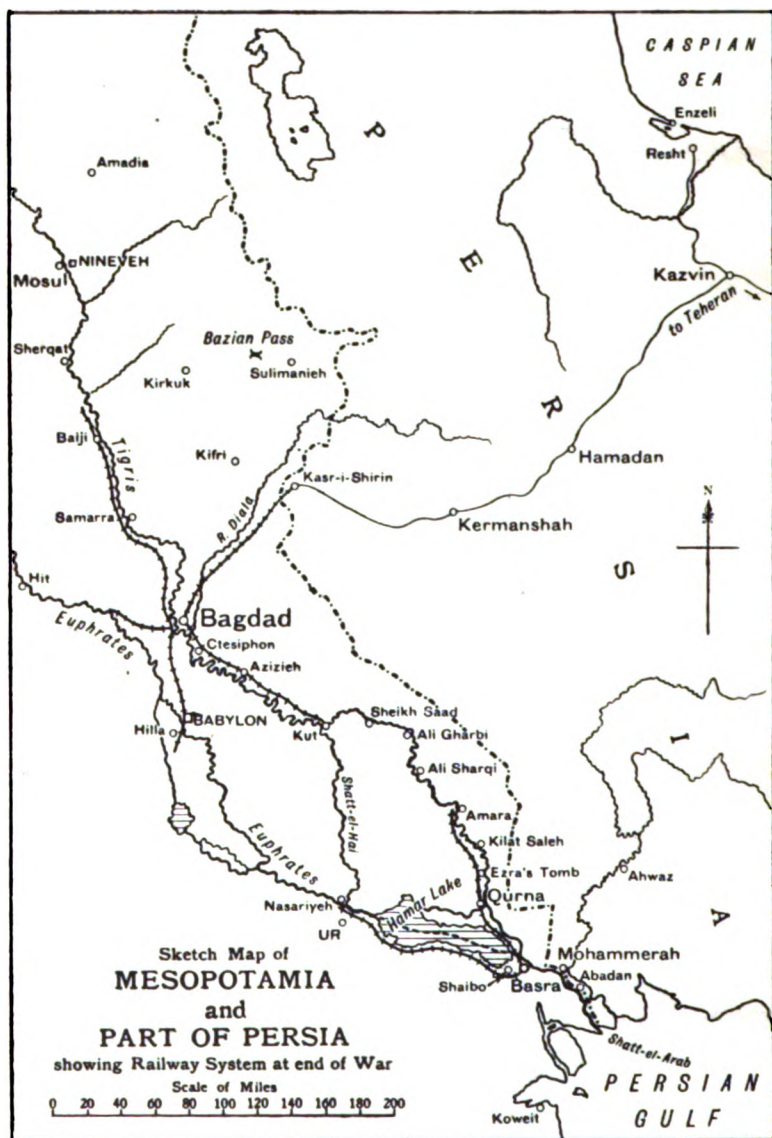
a melancholy sight appeared, twenty ocean steamers loaded with supplies and military stores lay awaiting unloading and had been so for weeks, so devoid was Basra of wharfage, port labour or port craft to handle all that was now pouring into the river.

On arrival I was met by Major-General Davidson of the Indian Army, the outgoing Inspector-General of Communications, who received me with open arms and went aboard his own vessel that evening.

There was evidently plenty to be done, and the seeing of my Staff and directors and getting to know them was the first important matter. I was pleased to find that my old friend of the Indian Frontier, Major R. S. St. John of the 20th Punjabis, was my Assistant-Quartermaster-General.

I found that G.H.Q. was still located in Basra at the British Consulate, though Sir Percy Lake, the Commander-in-Chief, was up the river, with my old Mountain Artillery and Staff College friend Major-General Arthur Money, Chief of the General Staff. The Deputy-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General of the Force, Major-General Cowper, however, was present, and I was soon able to hear all the appalling difficulties and troubles with which he was confronted. The Staff in India in modern times had not studied modern movement and logistics, while even at the War Office the organization of long-shore and river service was only partially understood. Fortunately at the latter office Sir John Cowans' receptive mind was able to get at those who could help him to handle a new problem.

At the time of my arrival, the garrison of Kut was in the last throes of its prolonged defence. The Commander-in-Chief was up close to the front of the Tigris Army Corps where Lieut.-General Sir George Goringe was making his final attempt to break through the cordon covering the siege.



Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

SOME SALIENT POINTS IN THE MESOPOTAMIAN
CAMPAIGN

It is no part of this narrative to reproduce the story of the Mesopotamian Campaign, which has been told often enough. The official history gives the full details of the sequence of events and the changing policies which produced so much of the trouble. But the military historian, like many strategians, is apt to think that Armies are fed by the Almighty by ravens and with manna and cruses of oil, rather than by the careful forethought of those who understand "provision" and transportation, and what is even more important, the maintenance of transport. The framers of plans are often "clever young officers of no practical experience" (I quote from one of the great captains of wars gone by), and there is nothing so hard for those who have no practical training—for those who have never lain awake at night to wonder how London is fed—to understand what a modern Army needs in the way of stores, railways or their equivalent, or in port facilities.

Some reference to the campaign in outline, however, is necessary to explain the trouble that befell and, in justice to many who have been blamed for what was no crime of theirs, several outstanding points need to be emphasized. The first is that the British Indian Force (known to the end as Force "D"), operating in Mesopotamia, had never been geared for the task it was eventually called on to undertake, or perhaps might be said drifted into undertaking. Force "D" was sent up the Persian Gulf to secure Basra, and to protect the oilfields of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and their works at Abadan on the Shatt-El-Arab. It should be realized that the world's geology had been playing a trick on the British nation. In the steam period, the possession by Great Britain alone of a

really first-class supply of steam coal had still further augmented her Naval control of the world.

With the advent of oil, this inestimable strategical asset has passed from us. Not only have we lost our supremacy as the possessors of the best fuel, but the world is turning to a fuel which is singularly deficient so far as yet known within the British Empire.¹

The Admiralty had become a large shareholder in the Anglo-Persian Company, because that oil is derived from lands easily controlled by Great Britain with its ocean port in what in war-time was a British "*mare clausum*."

Further, the possession of the exits of the Suez Canal practically confined Naval warfare in all its forms to west of Suez, once the few German cruisers, such as the *Emden*, had been destroyed, and it was most important that German mines should not find their way down the Tigris into the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. These two reasons took Indian Force "D," which was originally of the strength of a reinforced division, up the Shatt-El-Arab. It was equipped as for an Indian Frontier expedition, and it had to land and drive from the vicinity of Basra the weak Turko-Arab forces.

It was in the first place concerned with the immediate defeat of the garrison, chiefly the 38th Turkish Division, and the securing of the port from any guerilla molestation at the hands of the local Arabs. This meant the attaining of some elbow-room by occupying first Shaiba, and old Bussorah 8 miles to the west, across the alluvial mud plain, and secondly Qurna, 40 miles

¹ British enterprise is endeavouring to find more oil within British spheres and has done so since the War. Every year brings some advance, but so far as we know in 1930 the Empire is not rich in oil-bearing strata; on the other hand the distillation of oil from bituminous and even anthracite coal may not only restore the balance but restore England.

to the north, where the Tigris joined the old branch of the Frat or Euphrates, to form the Shatt-El-Arab, and also on the east Ahwaz, 40 miles up the Karun River, where the first rapids check navigation. Ahwaz, however, lay in Arabistan and the Persian tributary State of Muhammerah, and some convention with Persia was necessary before we could avail ourselves of the long-established friendship which Khazal, the Sheikh of Muhammerah, had always evinced.

The original British landing and occupation had met with sharp though not very serious or prolonged resistance, but the Turkish Government were not going to acquiesce in so easy a victory. By the spring of 1915 a very definite attempt on the part of the Turks to drive us into the sea began. A force moved down between Amara on the Tigris and the Persian Hills into Arabistan, rousing the local Arabs, threatening the British detachment on the Karun River and destroying and setting fire to the pipe-line which brought the crude oil from the fields to the Company's refining station at Abadan.

Then from Nasariyeh, the Turkish Governmental town and cantonment on the Lower Euphrates, a Turkish expedition was assembled, and prepared to advance over the desert supplied by adjacent marsh channels, to drive the British from Shaiba and Zobeir into the Shatt-El-Arab. This attack began just as Major-General Sir Arthur Barrett was handing over the command of the growing force to Lieut.-General Sir John Nixon, and it culminated in the battle of Shaiba fought on the high ground separated by 8 miles of mud and water from Basra. The flood season was on, and reinforcements had to pass over in boats, while guns and transports were painfully hauled through several feet of mud and water, and Turks also in boats from the marshes actually attacked the British endeavouring to row across.

Some day, when the Lord of Hosts makes up His jewels, Shaiba will be recognized as one of the decisive battles of the War, if not of the world. Fought between a weak Turkish Army Corps, hordes of Arab and Kurdish auxiliaries and three or four British Indian Brigades, it passed for little more than a ripple on the surface of the World War. But great issues were at stake. Half Asia was watching and was aware of the Turkish aspiration to drive the British into the sea. Not only the Arab tribes round Basra, but the whole of the Persian Gulf, the coasts of Mekran, the highlands of Afghanistan and the Indian Frontier, and even the Moslems of British-India were looking for a sign and a portent. The Sultan of Turkey, making use of his recently revived status as Caliph of Islam, and successor to the Prophet, had summoned the Moslem world to arms on the side of the Central Powers, to a war for the protection of the Faith. The Drum Ecclesiastic was reverberating from the mosques and minarets of the East, but the prudent were still watching. Had the British at Shaiba been crushed and hurled back into the mud as Islam hoped, not only would the whole of the Gulf have been "up" but the drum of "The Faith" would have rolled against the Frank all through India and its frontiers. The Mullahs at Kabul would have persuaded the friendly Amir, Habib Ullah, "The Beloved of God," that duty and interest demanded an invasion of India, as they persuaded his son four years later.

Fortunately the victory gained at Shaiba by Delamain and Mellis preserved the world from an Islamic outburst, while Sir John Nixon, newly arrived and flood-bound, watched anxiously among the Georgian cannon from the mud bastions of the city of Basra.

The reinforcements sent out with Sir John Nixon were by no means the last. At first it was considered necessary to push up the Euphrates to Nasariyeh,

and then up the Tigris to Amara to protect Basra and the oil-fields. Then it was found to be desirable to go to Kut-el-Omra (pronounced Koot), which we call Kut, to deny the Hai or old Tigris bed to boat traffic from Bagdad in the flood season. More and more troops arrived, and the port of Basra became more hopelessly congested and the daily consumption of ocean-borne tonnage increased with every new arrival.

But the march of events in the War elsewhere still further complicated matters. The attempt to take Bagdad entrusted to Major-General Townsend, which culminated in the retirement on Kut, after his Pyrrhic victory at Ctesiphon, and the attempt to relieve him when beleaguered, brought division after division to the country. But still the organization required in the rear was not undertaken.

THE PROBLEM OF BASRA

To understand the misery and disasters which eventually fell on the Army in the earlier year of the operations in Mesopotamia, it is necessary to study this problem of the base, and communication, on which all the trouble hinged.

The port of Basra is the formerly fortified town of Ashar, on the right bank of the Shatt 65 miles above the bar below Fao. The Shatt-El-Arab runs through a desert alluvial plain formed by the deposit of centuries, and extending every year several feet further into the Persian Gulf. It is fringed by the narrow belt of palm gardens already described, which near Basra and Ashar runs inland for a depth of 2 or 3 miles. For some distance on either bank short tidal creeks run up from the river for 3 or 4 miles, in which the rise and fall of the tide is sometimes as much as 12 feet. These creeks, which are often a hundred feet wide, with numerous side canals, fill the gridiron ditches on which the palm trees are planted. When

the tide is high everything is afloat, the gardens are flooded, and the palms get irrigation twice a day. The water is sweet enough, for no salt water comes up the river, the tide merely backing up the fresh water. The tail end of the creeks die away into the open alluvial desert on which nothing grows. Behind Basra these mud flats, which are impassable in rain, run for 8 or 10 miles, to the line of the higher ground, where the old mainland begins at Shaiba and old Basra, which is the Bussorah of Sinbad the sailor. When the "gates of heaven are opened" and "the fountains of the deep are loosed,"¹ in the combined season of river flood and strong sea winds, and the flood water from the Euphrates is forced back by the bar of sea water blown up from the Khor Abdulla at the head of the Gulf, then Basra is cut off from the mainland.

As the ocean steamers come up the river, they anchor off the "River Front" at Ashar, where on the bank there is a narrow strip of partly dry land, on which stand the few mercantile houses of the port, with irrigated palm gardens in rear. Above this comes the Ashar Creek leading up to the city of Basra, then the town of Ashar and another short space of dry bank, with one or two large houses. Above this island site comes 3 miles of flooded palm garden intersected by several creeks running 2 or 3 miles inland, and finally a piece of higher and dryer ground known as Makina.²

In the whole of 4 or 5 miles between Ashar and Makina there were only the dry spots referred to. The deep stream in which the ocean steamers could lie was in the centre of the river, too far out to be reached by any jetty. Ships were unloaded—two steamers

¹ See Genesis vii. 2 and viii. 3.

² The name is believed to be derived from a machine in a small factory hard by.

every three weeks would be the normal pre-war figure —by a few Arab port lighters.

Into this primitive form of port had come the original small British force which had captured Basra. Its departments seized on such dry spots as were available for supply, ordnance and engineer depots, and on some of the existing large houses as the nuclei of hospitals. The immediate demands of a small base were then filled, but communication between the various dry and vacant spots was chiefly by water, while the supply of small craft and motor-boats for locomotion was practically nil.

One of the peculiarities of Mesopotamia is that there is no potable water except in the rivers. To the foul water-way of the river in the port, the well-to-do inhabitants of Ashar and Basra send to draw the cleaner water from mid-stream. Wells dug in the drier belts in rear of the palm gardens yield water too salt to be drinkable. Therefore, on first arrival, troops and camps were dumped on any little dry patches among the irrigated palm gardens that were within reach of the river. Round the land side of Ashar ran an old bastioned mud wall, standing on ground slightly higher than the gardens, and camps strung out along it kept fairly dry.

A few officers of the Royal Indian Marine accompanied the original force, who handled heartily enough the small amount of river craft then in use, but no one in the Quartermaster-General's branch or the Naval side seemed to grasp what would be required if the force increased or moved up river. Good-will and shirt-sleeves was all that was required to cope with the inconveniences of the moment, and the needs of the few thousand troops involved in the earlier happenings.

Difficult as was communication by water, in the absence of tugs and motor-boats, it was worse on shore.

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To move behind the palm gardens in rear of the dry strip meant crossing half a dozen wide and deep creeks. The only roadway must be an embankment of alluvial mud. There was no metalling within reach. On the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates it was not possible to find even a stone to throw at a dog.

In the flood season in the spring of the year, even such dry patches as there were became saturated, and it was not even possible to bury the dead until a burial ground raised several feet above flood level had been constructed for the purpose.

It will be readily realized how impracticable a place was Basra, by land as well as by water, on which to base a large force, and how necessary it was to have some clear programme of work, and some idea of what was to be the goal. Labour for constructional purposes was badly required, but neither labour companies nor works companies were understood in India, nor at that stage of the War was any form of Labour organization for handling the hired local labour thought of, while the clearing of the ocean craft which entered the river was now far beyond the stevedoring resources of the normal port.

On the opposite bank to Ashar a fringe of palm gardens with tidal creeks also existed, and save for a Turkish military hospital occupied by our Marine ratings there was an equal dearth of dry land on the left bank of the Shatt.

The result of bringing large numbers of fresh troops into such a port can well be imagined. But though additional troops began to arrive after the various happenings just described, no scheme of town and port planning was formulated that showed any conception of what modern transportation required. No port was planned, no scientific lay-out was drawn up, no port facilities, no remodelling, no construction of wharves for ocean steamers were undertaken. The



At the commencement



The finished port

THE MAKING OF A WAR-PORT ON THE SHATT-EL-ARAB AT BASRA

demand for interport communication, launches and motor-boats grew greater, but little attempt was made to get them. No one seemed to be able to think large, though hard-working embarkation officers and military landing officers sweated far into the night, and engineer officers with scanty labour erected contrivances on the scale of a river expedition in Upper Burma.

Nor, as the Army began to press up the Tigris and Euphrates, did anyone grapple with the problem of river craft. The axiom which if presented in terms of oxen and camels was well enough understood, viz. that every mile of advance must double the distance to be traversed by land convoys, was not recognized as applicable to river steamers.

Neither the earlier Staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Nixon, nor the authorities in India were capable of grasping how desperately the situation was getting out of hand. As troops arrived they struggled up country through the congested camps and depots of Basra. Gradually camps were laid out on the dry plain in rear of the gardens between Basra and Makina, but as there were no pipes nor pumps available to bring the river water inland, nor little port transport to maintain the camps, the situation was long fraught with discomfort and conducive to ill-health.

As the first increments arrived, troops were pushed up the Euphrates to Nasariyeh and along the Tigris to Amara, straining to the uttermost the boat service and the few steamers of the Lynch Company already on the Tigris.

It was not, however, till the 3rd Lahore and 7th Meerut Divisions arrived from France early in 1916, followed by the 13th all-British Division from Gallipoli, that the aftermath of inadequacy set in. To receive these new divisions properly and to cater for them in the matter of hospitals, supplies and river transport was out of the question. Unfortunately the rivers in

India on which flotilla existed were the Ganges and Hooghly, the Bramaputra and the Irrawaddi, all of which ran into the Bay of Bengal on the side of India far removed from the Tigris and the Persian Gulf. The river of the West, the Indus, sixty years before had borne a considerable steamer flotilla, but this had long been replaced by the railways along its banks. Steamers could only come by rounding Cape Comorin, and for many months in the year the monsoons forbade the despatch of river steamers over the troubled seas. In fact, some eighteen stern-wheelers coming from Burma were actually lost at sea.¹

Because, however, the need at the front was great, and because the results of pushing them up were not realized, the reinforcing divisions struggled rather than marched up the Tigris to Sheikh Saad, 250 miles from Basra.² There were no roads along the Tigris banks, which were broken by swamp and creek, there were not enough steamers to transport the men, and so the bulk of the division marched by fragments as best they could.

The strain of these happenings, inadequately backed and staffed, had broken down Sir John Nixon, who was succeeded in January, 1916, by Lieut.-General Sir Percy Lake, Chief of the General Staff in India.

General Townsend in Kut had not surveyed his resources. He fixed a starvation date several months before his actual surrender, and to relieve him in time General Aylmer attacked the besieger before all his troops had come up, before he had any stock of artillery ammunition, and before his hospitals and ambulances had arrived to handle his wounded. What was believed to be necessity compelled him to

¹ This point was not sufficiently emphasized by the Government of India in refuting the charge of incapacity brought against it.

² Only a portion could be carried on the inadequate flotilla.

strike long before he was ready. The result of this sending of troops 250 miles from their base with no railway and a very inadequate flotilla behind them is well known. It should be written in letters of fire before every War Cabinet and before every General Staff. He who wills the end must will the means.¹

I have already mentioned that as I came up the Shatt-El-Arab there were over twenty ocean steamers anchored in the stream waiting to be unloaded, and with very little chance of being attended to. Now and again a frantic departmental officer would come and search for some urgent consignment of stores in one of the holds. Without jetties, with few port lighters, and fewer port tugs, with little or no port labour, and with no dry space to land the stores even if you could get them from the ships, it was obviously difficult to know where to begin.

The well-known and persistent defect of Indian Army organization, against which Sir Douglas Haig had so often inveighed, was evident. It had long been the custom for heads of departmental services to be termed Staff and work direct with the General, and the Staff had never been trained to co-ordinate. The Commander-in-Chief had decided that three months' reserve of supplies, ammunition and other stores, were to be laid in at Basra, and the Quarter-master-General communicated this policy to all con-

¹ The tragedy of Kut, which held out till April 29, 1916, after a date in January had been declared as starvation point, was curiously enough paralleled in the Defence of the Residency at Lucknow—the "Bailey Guard" as the Indian soldier always calls it. It is not generally known that Sir Henry Lawrence had laid in, in various underground store-houses, immense supplies of grain. He had not apparently informed the Military Staff. Owing to his early death, the Brigadier did not know of its existence. He also reported his starvation point to be far nearer than it actually was, and when the original garrison and Havelock's reinforcement was relieved by Sir Colin Campbell, huge stores of grain recently discovered were destroyed or abandoned.

cerned. But neither he nor the Inspector-General of Communications had realized that the port facilities were as yet hardly equal to receiving the daily requirements, let alone to bringing in sufficient tonnage to accumulate a reserve. No one had placed before the Commander-in-Chief what his order for three months' reserves meant, nor did the I.G.C. know what was going on, or, if he did, had no knowledge of how to control it. The heads of departments, supplies, ordnance stores, works, etc., in their zeal all wired to India for three months' reserves as soon as possible. India, already alarmed at her earlier failure, was now eager and prompt. Those reserves poured in, and Bombay was stripped of all ocean tonnage for the purpose. Almost the first message to reach me on my arrival was a letter from Sir George Kirkpatrick, the Chief of the General Staff in India, saying that the Bombay Chambers of Commerce were most perturbed at the lock-up of shipping at Basra. I was glad that he could not see that melancholy row of ships waiting to be cleared, worse even than the folly of Mudros Harbour.

The first thing to do was to try and settle the shipping problem, and I obtained the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief and the D.Q.M.G. to my sending a wire to say that till further notice no demands from any director were to be shipped unless the demand came through me. All other demands were to be got ready but not shipped. The D.Q.M.G. was to give me orders as to what stores he considered urgent and I was to get them through. The Commander-in-Chief also arranged that until matters of transit and base location were got square, the Directors should take all orders from me except the policy of provision, and scale, which they would of course get from the D.Q.M.G. I was thus made to assume more of the functions of the Q.M.G. himself than would normally

be warranted, but Major-General Cowper,¹ who had been struggling with an unbearable burden, helped me to take over for the time some of his functions, for the sake of clearing the tangle. When reins are badly crossed only one hand can disentangle before handing back, and I had come straight from the Q. part of the evacuation of Gallipoli, with some wider experience of shipping and port troubles than he.

It is but fair to say here that the Government of India—indeed, no less a person than Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy—had realized that an adequate port must be made. He had sent over Sir George Buchanan,² the expert consulting engineer on port work and river navigation, to see what could be done, and matters were beginning to move; but owing to some failure to weave his functions into the military machine, his value was at first lost. Also Sir John Byles, the ship-building adviser to the India Office, was busy designing steamers and barges, which were being built at home, to all of which I will refer later. *But this was April, 1916, and Kut was falling!*

THE HOSPITAL SCANDALS

It is necessary at this stage to refer to the hospital scandals which created such a sensation at the time. Though the hospital shortage was already engaging the attention of the authorities in India, they came to public notice through the action of Major Markham Carter of the Indian Medical Service, who was serving on an ocean-going hospital ship running between Bombay and Basra. Most of what he alleged and described was perfectly true, though some of the effect of his accounts was minimized by the over-colouring

¹ Affectionately known in the Army as "Pelly Cowper."

² Whose name has recently been so much before the public in the Bombay reclamation controversy, and whose treatment was more worthy of Peking than of Simla and Whitehall.

of his descriptions and misunderstanding of what he saw, as well as the fact that he himself had seen little of the conditions he wrote about. The heavy fighting during General Aylmer's attempt to relieve Kut had entirely overburdened all the ambulance arrangements. Further, there were no ambulance steamers and very few barges fitted to carry sick, in the general inadequacy of the steamers and barges on the river for the operations the Army was attempting to carry out. As steamers and barges arrived at the front with troops and animals, before even the horse-dung could be cleared away sick and wounded on stretchers would be laid on the deck, indeed often on the bare boards, unavoidably, and hurried away downstream on a trip of several days to the base, or to the big hospital centre existing in some sort at Amara, the Turkish official town 130 miles upstream from Basra. Now if ordinary transport steamers and barges are, *faute de mieux*, to be used for sick transport, the following is essential: (a) Sufficient establishment to clean them out at once, at the advanced base, or wherever they receive their sick; (b) A surgery and medical store and storekeeper on board, with such kitchen arrangements and material as can be made available; (c) A distinct establishment available at the advanced base ready to put on with the sick.

None of the above was available. The overworked ambulances at the front had reluctantly to find personnel for the purpose, and they had to keep it miserably low. The state, therefore, in which the convoys were arriving downstream was much as Major Carter's lurid accounts depicted it. It was all part of the same story, the jamming of more troops into a difficult, undeveloped theatre of war than that theatre could hold.

But it was also part of the story of the want of administrative organization or comprehension of war

requirements from which the Government of India suffered. The medical services of the Indian Army were quite inadequately organized for a war of heavy casualties, and there was practically no cult of medical officers in India who had studied this side of their duties. Lord Kitchener himself, whose outlook on such matters came from the Nile and the exiguous conditions that sufficed to cater for the sick on a Nile campaign, was most unreceptive to representation of the need for adequate hospital organization if it cost money.

The various natures of hospital units, ambulances, stationary and general hospitals needed in an Army were to some extent provided in Mesopotamia; but in the stress of the operation, and not apparently realizing how the equipment of each was only really suited for its special purpose, the medical authorities had allocated them to quite different work from that for which they were intended. At my first trip up the Tigris I found general hospitals serving as stationary hospitals and clearing hospitals, clearing hospitals serving as general hospitals and the like. And it must be remembered that, owing to the inadequacy of the port, the more stuff came, the less it could be made use of. I found that a complete Territorial General Hospital with huts, organized in London for Salonika, had been sent out under the command of Colonel Bruce-Porter,¹ but could not be unloaded for weeks.

BASRA TO THE FRONT

Within ten days of my arrival the inevitable happened. Kut the beleaguered fell (April 29th, 1916). A desperate attempt to run food through on one of the best of our steamers failed hopelessly, with the loss of some specially gallant lives.

With the fall of Kut, there were very naturally

¹ Now Colonel Sir Bruce Bruce-Porter.

apprehensions as to possible excitement among the tribes along the 250 miles of Tigris between Basra and the front, and in that city itself. I received orders from G.H.Q. (at that time the I.G.C. also had charge of the L. of C. Defences) to demonstrate! The only way to do this was to walk round and show our muscle by marching all the troops and details available through the city as new arrivals. The city and the big bazaars of Basra were mightily entertained and all the dancing girls turned out to see them, but as a matter of fact the Basra City and its neighbourhood had no love for the Turks and had quite made up their minds that the British were going to win.

Sir Percy Lake now came back from the Tigris, and hurried off to the other fronts, on the Karun and Euphrates, having left General Gorrington in command before Kut to settle down for the summer. I then started off up-river after seeing the chief, being most particularly charged to discover why the tinned milk, of which tons had been sent up, was not being issued—Gorrington had waxed very sarcastic at its non-arrival.

It was 250-odd miles to Sheikh Saad, which had been the advanced base for all the attempts to relieve Kut. I had stipulated that this must come under the I.G.C. instead of the G.O.C. of the Tigris Corps, if any system was to be developed, and the Chief had approved. All the way up the marching columns of mounted details and first-line wagons, parts of ammunition columns and the like, were struggling up-river. There were at present no fixed posts with ration depots or sanitary arrangements, and the troops were wandering up an unconsolidated road on which the sappers were struggling to improve the bridges and the surface. The constant winter rains had made the lot of these columns pretty wretched. Having no transport with them, each column had one or two Arab sailing vessels, *mahelas*, with their rations, and much good

river transport was locked up this way. The first post was at Qurna, 40 miles above Basra, merely at present a post on the road. The old channel of the Euphrates joined the Tigris here, and because an ancient Sumerian tradition put the Garden of Eden at the junction of the Euphrates, and the Army had been told so, it was assumed that Qurna was the spot. Atkins waxed eloquent on the theme, and in laying out the camp we had Eve Lane and Temptation Square, and a very old fig-tree the Tree of Life. The Sumerian legend really referred to the old junction of the two rivers, somewhere near the Haqiqa bund, and not the present junction of the Shatt-El-Hai with the Good Frat or Euphrates, for it is only there or at the site of the Semitic legend up towards Hit, where the old school geographies show it, by the Gishon and the Hiddekel, that conditions to produce any sort of "garden" and free irrigation could have existed.

Of the many yarns of Atkins and Bible stories, and of Eden, the following is perhaps the best.

It was hot and mosquito-ey, as Qurna alone can be, and an officer said to his sergeant, "They tell us that this is the site of the Garden of Eden."

"Well, sir, then all I've got to say is that no wonder the twelve apostles deserted."

From Qurna the uncomfortable and crowded little steamer, which was all I then had, chunked up past that beautiful Ezra's tomb, with its dome of hedge-sparrow blue tiles, that the tile-makers cannot now produce, and its festoons of palm-trees and expectant women with their "Rebecca" jugs. It was a real Jewish shrine like that of Ezekiel on the Frat, and not Moslem as the Tomb of Daniel at Shush or of Jonah at Nineveh. Above Ezra's tomb the Tigris runs through the "Narrows," having sent most of its water off on either side through Amara and the great channels further down.

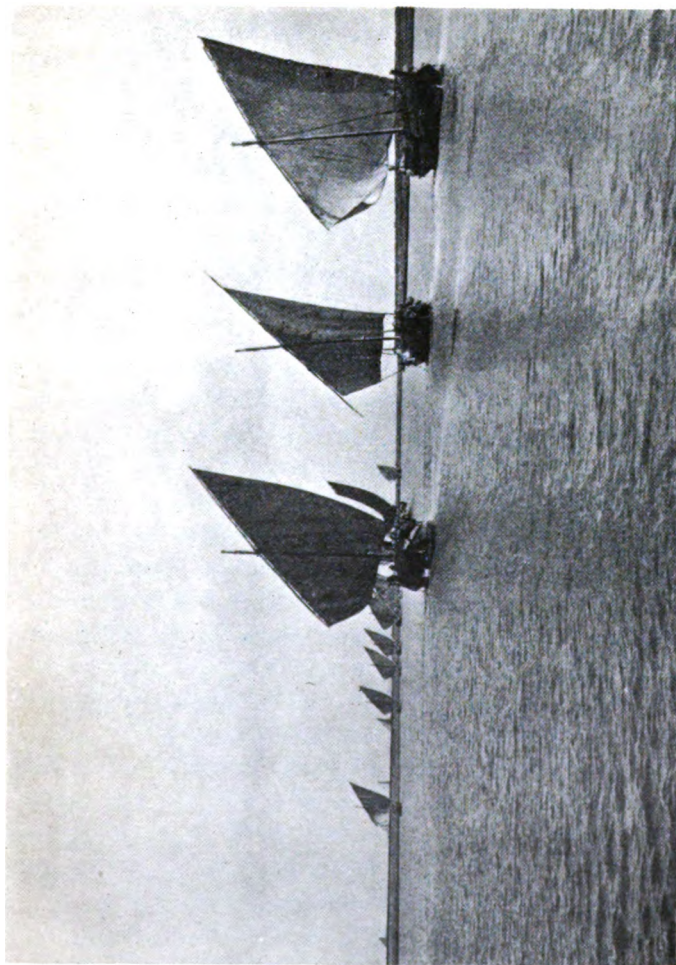
The navigable channel is here very narrow, silts easily at certain periods and is exceedingly tortuous, so that steamers coming down are thrown against the banks, and often damaged, and it is essential that paddle-steamers should have barges on each side to protect their paddles.

In the midst of the narrower Tigris came the delightful little town of Qilat Saleh, inhabited chiefly by Jews and the curious boat-building, buffalo-keeping folk the Sabeans, who are often spoken of as "John the Baptist Christians," which they are certainly not, being neither the followers of John nor Christians and a people who are being fast absorbed into Islam for want of a driving force of their own.

Later on we were able to light the Narrows with electric light and so navigate them by day and night, which was very essential as our liabilities for rapid transit grew and grew.

Amara was the first military place of any importance up-river, and was a large town, chiefly constructed in the days of Abdul Hamid, who took wives from the Sheikhs' families round and developed his property into a residential river-front. From our first move up the Tigris, it had become our centre, and was now full of hospitals and details for the Army at the front. The place itself as a post I found in fair order, but suffering as the whole force was from improvisation on a scale for a smaller force than was now in the country. But it was not till I went to the detail camp, outside the L. of C. Station, belonging to the four divisions forming the Tigris Corps, that I found such a horror as I never want to see again—far exceeding the disorder at Mudros.

Two Indian divisions from France, the 13th British Division and several new brigades from India, had been pushed up along this line, competent neither to carry them nor feed them. At Amara had been left behind



THE ORGANIZED FLEET OF ARAB CRAFT SAILING UP TO GENERAL MAUDE

the details of animals and wagons and oddments from brigades and divisional troops that could be spared to lessen the drain on rations. Innumerable small parties of more than three divisions were squatting under no competent control or discipline, all over a muddy plain.

Tents were not properly pitched, men slept in the mud and boiled old billies uncontrolled or unhelpt. The young officers, almost all temporary-commissioned with no experience, had little control over their men or any idea of what to do. Every sort of sickness was about, nobody shaved, nobody dressed, odd horses, mules, ordure and horse-litter lay in one unhappy confusion.

I am not often rude to senior officers, but I fell on the Colonel of the Indian Army commanding the post, and said, "I will give you three days, after which I shall be back. If this place is then not like a Durbar camp, I will hang you to your own flagstaff."

Now the curious thing about it is that it was so. I came back in a few days, and found soldiers parading in the alley-way, horses clean, latrines in order, incinerators going up, men shaving and happy, and having the appearance of soldiers and self-respecting beings, instead of a hopeless crew waiting only for the typhoid germ. That good Colonel was not man enough to assert himself, but quite competent to do it with my *hukm* behind him. And it is often thus and worth remembering. It is part of the old story of "my partner, a very hard man."

At Amara the Tigris as you look up-stream suddenly turned sharp left, and it was always our fear that it might at any day, with all this navigation, elect to go straight on, as a large part of the water did already, into the marshes east of Amara.

Steaming on, we passed the shrine of Ali in the East, Imam Ali Sherg, which belied the apparent fact that

Mesopotamia grew no trees, for the domed shrine was planted in a magnificent grove of gnarled and pollarded old Persian poplars, which had escaped the irresistible tendency of the pastoral Arab to cut every tree down for fuel, possibly to some extent due in latter years to the coming of the steamer.

A few miles farther on we came to the village of Kumait, whose women elected to show their contempt for the British by throwing their only garment up over their heads, to the great amusement of Atkins, and then on the Shrine of Ali in the West, the Imam Ali Garabi, which had been the advanced base during the earlier days of General Aylmer's advance to the relief of Kut, and which had still a collection of stores and details.

At last we manœuvred our steamer into Sheikh Saad, the then advanced base, already in the hands of competent officers who only wanted more material to get things in good order. This post was soon to become the base whence General Maude was to defeat the Turks and clear the road to Bagdad.

I went at once to see General Gorringe and his Staff, after first seeing countless cases of the missing milk piled in pyramids. I soon found out what had happened. I have related elsewhere of the almost ineradicable habit of the Indian departmental chiefs to act and be permitted to act as if they were Staff officers. I found the principal Medical Officer (the D.D.M.S.) had given orders to the principal Supply Officer (the D.D.S. & T.) that no milk was to be issued to the troops until some absurd reserve for the hospitals had been accumulated. Now for the D.D.M.S. to issue orders on such a subject, or for the D.D.S. & T. to accept them, could only have happened in India or Pekin. I found the responsible Staff officer, the Deputy-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, my friend Brigadier-General C. Rattray, knew nothing

of the orders, at the news of which he was astounded, nor of the arrival of the stuff, and the D.D.S. & T. had been quite happy to take the doctor's orders. And the curse of the robin lies so heavy on Hind that I can quite imagine a lapse again to such doings when the Staffs' backs are turned. Nor can the medical mentality be understood outside of Pekin or Nanking, to keep the milk for the sick when hundreds were becoming sick for want of it.

General Gorrington I found a little difficult and strained, and inclined to keep steamers hanging about on the river near the troops, which was very convenient to them, but meant that the steamers were not cleared and sent back for several days, and as I tried to explain only meant that he got a good many tons less a day's yield at riverhead. I pointed out that his camps were at the furthest 10 miles from the advanced base by road, but twice that distance by curling river bends, and that he had enough pack animals and carts and artillery animals to fetch his stuff every day by road. He was not very accessible on the subject, so I sent a wire to the Q.M.G. that I intended to give quite clear orders to the steamers unless I heard from him to the contrary. The troops at the front were very tired, after their superhuman exertions, the summer was coming on and the sandfly curse was already unbearable. Fresh vegetables, more variety of rations, real lime juice with some vitamins in it, were imperative, and some form of canteen. Amara was a fine centre for fresh vegetables, but I found them being sent up in sacks, to be fetid on arrival, instead of in crates, for which there was ample material. We struck a muddy streak of officers of the S. and T. Corps at this period, hampered by an absurd audit system from India which sapped all their energy.

I found also that something like a hundred Arab sailing craft, averaging perhaps 20 tons, and allowing

for the vicissitudes of a voyage of 250 miles up-stream and back, capable of delivering 100 tons a day at the front, were lying idle, as "transport train" equivalent, in case of an advance. I wired to the Q.M.G. recommending its immediate release.

Before I left, General Maude commanding the 13th Division, whom I had helped refit in Port Said, had sent a message that I must not miss seeing him, and turned up on board my steamer. A stirring hour we had together. There I heard his account of all the follies of leading he had experienced and all the *chinoiseries militaires* which he had suffered from at the hands of the Indian Departments. As he said, "No one in this cursed force seems to know where to begin," and I cordially agreed.

THE HUMAN TROUBLE

The humanities of a force which had been so long depressed and engaged in costly failures was worth studying. There was no place for decent rest. First cold wet rain and mud with no billets, now increasing heat and few decent tents, with a dull ration, absolutely no canteen arrangements, nowhere to go to for rest billets.

The men were wonderful considering, and where the officers were good, were beyond all praise, but even then there was no other word for it—stale. The Indian troops were bribing the Indian Medical subordinates to send them away sick, and they were inducing disease by various devices. The 15th Lancers, the rather famous old Mooltani Horse, who thought an Army could live without discipline, on the camaraderie system, had justified the criticisms which other regiments had always levied against them—hot air and no discipline. They had actually refused to march, because there was a faint religious dislike to move against Bagdad and the holy places of Islam,

a dislike fed by some underground current, but only really prevalent because of cold feet. They had not been ordered to march, but asked if they would like to! Phew! Folk who do that do not deserve an Army, but we had already seen the same evil at the Curragh. So the poor old Mooltanis were wiped off the Army List, spoilt for the want of a word and a blow!

When feet are cold religious scruples are apt to bulk large, but the moment the rations improved and Maude got the fighting tails up, we heard no more of religious scruples, and even the steamers seemed to want docking less.

India had begun to send us some canteen stores, but *more suo* without any distributing organization, merely chucking some thousands of pounds worth of stores at overworked S. and T. officers and asking for absurd audit accounts. Most of the stores never got to their destination, some were pilfered, others peculated by unscrupulous subordinates, and it was a real bad show. I found that at least 60 per cent. of the drafts were not getting to the front, malingering or going sick by the way. There were no decent rest camps, while there was as yet no water-purifying system on the steamers, the men drinking from the river. Until enough tanks and chlorinating sets could be available, the issue of a double tea and sugar ration seemed the easiest way out, so that the men on the barges could boil their water all day long and lap up tea. This is always a good scheme when water is bad.

THE MEDICAL SITUATION

The medical situation was steadily improving. On my way down I met the new D.M.S. and with him the priceless Matthew Fell, and we put our boats alongside and talked hard. We agreed that until more resources and a proper nursing staff, hitherto thought impossible in the climate, arrived, improvisation was unavoidable.

B.S.M.W.

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able. Fell was to remain with my Headquarters, and we soon found that we understood each other exactly. The first essential was to see that the unavoidable use of returning transport barges for sick was put on the best possible lines. I insisted to them and to the Chief that, however much humanity might shout, we could spare no steamers to be fitted yet as hospital boats, though we had a few barges and could fit a few more. The maintenance of the force in health and fighting condition was an even greater consideration than the care of sick for the moment. But hospital steamers and barges were on their way, being built in Great Britain.

Fell and I also saw eye to eye with the necessity for preserving the health of medical and nursing personnel by accommodating them reasonably, before even the sick. As I put it to the Chief, we could always get plenty more sick and wounded where they came from, but we could not get more nurses and doctors. The same thing applied to the skilled workshop personnel that we were getting for the steamers. On first thoughts it seems callous, but on second thoughts it was good hard common sense. With the wet bulb and the dry bulb creeping up together to over 100, it was the nurses and doctors who would want fans and ice, even before the sick, if the world was to go on and sick were to be attended.

We were organizing the Works Directorate, and we could soon get ahead with better hospital accommodation all round. But with very little hospital accommodation yet built and with very little labour yet available, and with but few ocean hospital ships for our needs, we had to send our walking sick back to India in empty transports with hardly any attendants.

At Amara I found Sir Victor Horsley as consulting physician. He came on board my steamer in the middle of the day drenched in perspiration, declaring

he would bring all his gouty patients there. Then he tackled me for allowing a barge of rum, which just then passed by, to exist on the river. I agreed with him that it did no one any good, but it did what was more important, it made them think they were done good to and they reacted accordingly, while at four o'clock on a dark morning, with a barrage about to begin, men liked to impose on themselves with it. Alas, he died a few weeks later at his post, a victim to too energetic work for his age in the noonday heat.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE LINE

Among other things to be put right was the want of responsibility along the L. of C. The area had not been divided up into sections, and no one had any particular jurisdiction outside a post on the line. The first thing to do was to divide the line up into sections, with a commandant responsible for each section, and to give him as soon as possible means to get about. D'Arcy Brownlow had the base section, which was expanded to cover all the river down to Fao and a few miles above Basra. We interpolated a new section at Qurna, where a good deal of trans-shipment was to take place, gave Amara a considerable distance up and down stream, and instituted a riverhead for certain class of boats in advance of the Advanced Section but under its orders. Thus at present the river had Base, Qurna, Amara and Advanced Sections, and later on we had a Kut and a Euphrates Section. Motor-boats were our trouble. India was full of them, but no one was man enough to commandeer them in any numbers. We wanted many for getting about and we wanted them for ambulance work.

As soon as I had mastered the situation, I sat me down and wrote to the good Jack Cowans as ordered, saying that India was not fit to be responsible for things and that the Indian Marine, with their lack

of big experience, small cadre and feeble support from Government, could not, however great their zeal, make a job of it. That we must have a separate Port Directorate and have some people from Home fit to manage a growing river service on business lines. Also that the port must not be under anyone except the I.G.C., and that on no account must the Navy intervene. The Marine are difficult enough to fit into a complete organization, but the Navy would be disastrous. Cowans responded by sending out one of the most competent men I have ever had the privilege of knowing, one Colonel afterwards Brigadier-General Grey, a driving organizing merchant from the Niger, with all the backing that the new Inland Water Transport organization at the War Office could give him. As soon as he understood that there was only one king on the river, viz. the I.G.C., but that the I.G.C. would back him in every possible way and never interfere with his technical judgment unless the need of the Army as a whole demanded it, we were the very best of friends. There was trouble over the port, for they wanted to manage that ; but as the Government of India had already sent us Sir George Buchanan, who had got things under way for an efficient port, I was not going to support Grey in this particular. The Government of India, in their desire to put things right over the heads of what they thought was a sticky administration, had given Buchanan a charter of control over all the rivers in terms that needed re-arranging. He could not be ousted, and I recommended that Grey should have the general conservancy of the fairway after an agreed-on policy had been adopted, but I said it was obvious that Buchanan with his vast experience of rivers should draw up the main lines and undertake any larger works, and told the Chief that I would see that the two had free discussions together. We eventually found a working

distribution of duties that gave Grey full scope for his energies and powers of organization, without interfering with Buchanan, who had been placed under me for co-ordination and detail.

A marching road, with proper rest camps, supply dumps and sanitation, and small garrisons all the way to the front, some 250 miles, was the first desideratum, as most of our wagons and animals and many of our reinforcements would have to march, however plentiful the fleet became. By the autumn it was a pleasure to see the healthy, orderly columns passing steadily up.

The demands made by Sir Percy Lake's Headquarters were now bearing fruit. Large paddle-steamers were being built at home to Sir John Byles' plans, to burn oil, which was available at Abadan to any amount, while a quantity of tunnel tugs had been laid down.

From England, too, came six little Thames penny steamers, the *Dick Whittington*, the *Christopher Columbus*, and the like, which ran under their own steam from port to port, in the most daring way, two in command of interned German skippers from Hull. They came, still smelling of stale bathbuns, and while too small for passenger work, had powerful engines by Ratsey of Bristol as good as the day they were put down, and would chunk a couple of hundred-ton barges with the best. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company, who were struggling with Naval gunboats, were also slowly erecting a few barges for us, but could make no great progress for want of workmen. Sir Henry McMahon in Egypt had tried to get us some Nile steamers, but the rubbish from tourist fleets reached us that could hardly make headway against the stream, and could tow nothing. I imagine the Nile does not deal with the sort of towing craft we needed, but in any case we wanted good stuff and not to serve as a dumping ground for things past mark of mouth.

But we were very short of decent personnel, and the Marine authorities in India thought that fourth mates of ocean tramps were suitable people for our larger river steamers.¹ They were, in fact, most unsuitable even when not in whisky, for the navigation of craft in narrow waters is not one of their accomplishments, besides they were wanted badly at sea. What we wanted was good Indian *seraings* from the river companies of India and men from the rivers of the world, with the "green ticket" and the like.

Our worst need was a dockyard. The wise folk who had thought they could do our work for us did not realize that a river fleet must have large repair yards. Yet no one would send us workmen or machinery. What we wanted was a large policy, not a baby one. Calcutta offered to fit out an old steamer of about 14-foot draft, as a workshop with lathes and the like. I accepted this thankfully. Later on our fleet was so increasing we found it was not 10 per cent. of what we needed, so it was gutted and the machinery used on shore.

Fortunately we had an engineer officer of the Royal Indian Marine, one Captain Robertson, who had a really big organizing mind. He stayed when the I.W.T. came, and was eventually controller of first-class workshops, with docks and slipways and ample repair shops.

As it was going to be some time before our new steamers and barges could materialize, it was essential to get every effort we could from the native craft, and everything we could lay hands on was dug out from every creek and rigged. Mindful of the delay that King Hammurabi had complained of, orders were given to each of them to be signalled as they passed various points on the river and one or two gingerers in fast small craft were appointed to drop on the Arab

¹ Perhaps could find no one else,

habit of *dolce far niente*. The Controller of Native Craft had an excellent Arab Sheikh as assistant, and undoubtedly we made that fleet fly. A very picturesque sight it was to see them in batches of twenty in full sail, or being towed against the wind. The Arab boatman would tow "starko," much to the horror of the Indian soldiery, who eventually spoilt their simplicity and taught them to wear quite unnecessary clothes. Their appearance certainly justified the description of Ezekiel.

The *Mahela*, the Tigris vessel, was a keeled boat, while the *Baylum*, the Euphrates boat, was flat-bottomed to cross the large lagoons into which that river had deteriorated. Both kinds from 5 to 30 tons.

I managed to get the old *Falam*, a stern-wheeler, for the Chindwin for my own use, fitted with wireless and searchlight for night travel, carrying a Nordenfelt gun and able to ship my horses and motor-car. Under the name of S.1, she was well-known and usually carried canteen stores to prevent her appearance causing alarm and despondency.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

THE SUCCESSIONS OF GENERAL MAUDE

AS the weather got hotter, General Gorringe was feeling the effect of all he had gone through, and his telegrams, not only to me but to G.H.Q., showed how strained he was, and Sir Percy Lake asked the C.G.S. and myself for our views. We unanimously agreed that he wanted a rest and that it was neither fair to him nor to us to keep him going. He was therefore ordered to Great Britain and Maude was appointed to the Tigris Corps in his stead, and very rightly. But those who knew all that Gorringe had done and had been through were anxious enough that he should go in all honour and consideration.

With Maude at the Corps we soon found that we could get plenty of ideas and suggestions, and I was able to communicate with him very freely. It was much to the good that he should have had a short time with the Corps before being called on to command.

At the end of August Sir Percy Lake, who was over sixty years of age, had found himself brought very low by the trying damp heat of Basra and the rising wet bulb and the anxiety he had been through, added to the lesser trouble of the Commission on the medical scandals, scandals happily long over, and by no means his fault. A wire from the War Office, couched in considerate terms, directed him to hand over to Maude, and this set the board for the victorious phase. Very shortly after it was decided to separate A and

Q, and "Pelly" Cowper gave way to Brigadier-General Knox as D.Q.M.G. and Brigadier-General Felix Ready as D.A.G.

Soon after the accession of Maude, the whole of the plans and preparations were put before him, and he at once placed demands at Home for many things that he needed, notably more transport, cars, etc. The latter India had entirely failed to find for us, in spite of all their available resources in cars; lorries of course were not available to them. New R.A.S.C. and R.A.O.C. directors were now sent to get those Services on to modern lines.

Maude had with some difficulty persuaded the people at Home that it was no good having him there unless an offensive policy was to be adopted, and he got grudging approval to his driving the Turks out of the "Province of Basra," which included Kut. He was to have two Army Corps on the Tigris, and immense efforts were to be made to supply both troops and ancillary services to compose these Corps.

A little before Maude took over the Command, Major-General A. Cobbe, V.C., came out to take over the VIIth Indian Division and he now succeeded to the command of the Tigris Corps, while the new Corps was to be commanded by Lieut.-General Marshall, who was hurried out from Salonika.

Very early in the autumn, General Maude, satisfied with what was going on on the river, took himself up to Arab Village, on the left bank of the Tigris some miles above Sheikh Saad, with all his Headquarters, the better to prepare his plans for the advance and to handle himself the two Corps that would soon be at his disposal. I visited him here several times, and attended his rather interminable pow-wows and conferences. He wanted to keep his heads of Services gingered up, and liked to have them on the mat almost daily. That is all right when you are gingering,

but to me it's a damnable habit, and I would only have conferences myself once or twice a week unless specially necessary.

After one of them, I was somewhat tickled, on entering the anteroom of the clerks' tents at G.H.Q., to find pinned up by some impertinent wag, "Subject for next directors' conference: 'Do barmaids eat their young?'"

The various directors whom Sir Percy Lake had temporarily placed under me, while the reins were being straightened out, reverted to their permanent place with the Q.M.G., and only the proper I.G.C.'s directors remained attached to my Headquarters and under my control, viz., Railways, Works, Port and Inland Water Transport.

THE INLAND WATER TRANSPORT (I.W.T.)

With the arrival of General Grey we soon began to get a move on, though some of his success was of course due to the fact that the steamers ordered before from Home at last began to arrive. Proper river men on the steamers, a proper plan for workshops, docks and slipways, a businesslike tally and method of doing work now took shape. The obvious way to handle the river pilots was introduced, i.e. on sections instead of on the through trip. The Marine had always stipulated for steamers that did not draw more than 4 feet 6 inches. General Grey, when he heard that the boats on the Ganges and Brahmaputra draw 5 feet and 5 feet 6 inches, pointed out that we could perfectly well work such boats on the lower reaches only, and that their barges could be changed at Ezra's Tomb to lighter draught steamers, and that some of them could be warped up to the Amara-Sheikh Saad part of the river, above the Narrows, where they could perfectly well be used. We were thus able to increase our fleet from sources hitherto said to be useless to us.

Sir John Cowans also sent us out a host of barges in sections, and instead of the inadequate workshops of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company at Abadan, a company of erectors sent us from the Clyde, and we put together our own barges and tunnel tugs with great rapidity.

Many of these improvements did not come till some time after Maude's advance, and many were only necessary when the capture of Bagdad doubled the length of our river line from 250 to 500 miles.

With the coming of General Grey, the hardworked, overstrained Captain Huddleston, R.I.M., worn to a frazzle by the futility of trying to get all he wanted from India, left us with credit to himself and the good wishes of us all, and a period of real commercial efficiency set in.

The good Indian Marine officers, of whom there were many, were retained and given temporary military rank in the I.W.T. (R.E.). That meant only one writ could possibly run. Sir George Buchanan's port folk were all similarly graded, which meant I could skin the lot if need be, at any moment.

RAILWAYS AND WORKS

The railway problem was a complicated one. General Nixon had naturally wanted a line to enable him to maintain the force at Nasariyeh which strategy demanded, in view of the breakdown of the Euphrates route, in low water. But instead of pressing for this entirely on military grounds a side argument was allowed to creep in, in the shape of a reference to its post-war value. That "tore it." It gave the Finance Member of the Indian Government, famed as a prince of destructive criticism, a fair opportunity to say, that if the Commander-in-Chief in India would assure him that it was necessary on military grounds he would agree. The Commander-in-Chief did not

take up a strong line, and Nixon did not get his railway.

Sir Percy Lake, formerly the Chief of the General Staff in India, had now to eat some of his own pudding.

Sir Percy's allowance of pudding to begin with was but the 2-foot 6-inch line and rolling stock stored for the Loie Shilman advance on the Peshawar frontier, the same that had been used for the sightseeing line at the Delhi Durbar. It was to be laid to Nasariyeh over the desert via the field of Shaiba, 146 miles in all. It was a poor pudding, though in the hands of a 2-foot 6-inch enthusiast, Major Barclay from the Bengal and Assam Railway, it was being now pushed as hard as labour would permit. But it was obvious that a 2-foot 6-inch with heavy rails and powerful stock of which Barclay dreamed was different from the light stuff sent us. Very shortly after my arrival wiser counsels prevailed. It was an essential, to make the Nasariyeh position secure if we were to advance up the Tigris in the face of German direction, to have a larger gauge. There was no standard-gauge stuff in India and the great heavy 5-foot 6-inch of the main lines was beyond our needs and our power to transport. It was then decided very properly to pull up the few miles of 2-foot 6-inch line already laid, to make the line to Nasariyeh metre gauge and to put down the light stuff between Qurna and Amara, 70 miles. It was out of the question at present to bridge the Euphrates at Qurna or at the main junction just above Basra, so that this piece of line must be "on its own." Its use here would mean that since Qurna would take ocean ships of 14-foot draft and we had some small tramps available, stores could go that far in vessels not useful on the through trip. Some of the smaller vessels from Bombay, after unloading a thousand tons, could also move to Qurna. The first thing to do was to make an ocean wharf at Qurna for railway material

and then for stores, and this quiet little abode of Temptation Lane became a busy subsidiary port. The landing of metre-gauge material, however, was a very great difficulty, as necessarily none of Buchanan's work could bear fruit as yet. Indeed, the getting in of his material added equally to our embarrassment, so vicious was the circle in which we were involved.

Later on when we got to Bagdad the whole railway problem increased and we bridged the Euphrates close to Basra and again at Qurna, and were lucky enough to find a spot above Basra where railway stores could be landed. Soon after Maude took over, the railway organization was enlarged and Brigadier-General Lubbock, an experienced railway sapper, came as Director of Railways. The metre gauge was gradually laid up to the Persian border beyond Bagdad, the 2-foot 6-inch being always taken up and relaid ahead, till the metre gauge could replace it.

The Engineer services on the L. of C. were a great difficulty. We had neither personnel nor material, nor could material be landed till the port developed. Fortunately for me and the force, Colonel Stokes Roberts, R.E., who had been for a while Chief Engineer of the Tigris Corps, was appointed Director of Works. Never have I met a more able, more devoted or more accomplished engineer, or a more lovable character. That man worked and slaved with energy and wisdom, our works companies from India—the companies of organized artificers—came along, and the ordinary labour from India increased. We threw off the incubus of the Engineer-in-Chief, who had no legal control over the Director of Works but had wanted to exercise it, so that now when he came, he came on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, to look and advise but not to interfere. With Stokes Roberts was Major Keith Edgar, R.E., another devoted sapper, and under their guidance hospitals and huttings, electric lights,

ice factories, roads, bridges and everything else that made that swamp into a base fit for men to pass through grew apace.

Alas, poor Stokes Roberts ! After accompanying me to the same entertainment as General Maude, at which the latter was supposed to have contracted cholera, he was taken ill with pneumonia and had not the strength to fight. He passed away to our great loss and my lasting regret. Keith Edgar, too, alas ! has passed away prematurely since the War, a victim to the wet bulb of those Tigris summers if ever there was one.

Labour, as I have said, was the difficulty. Arab labour needed organizing, and that we set about, but officers to control labour were hard to come by. Fortunately the Government of India had now got busy, and Indian Labour Corps began to arrive with pensioned India officers in charge of companies, fine old tykes of the fighting Services. One, a white-bearded *subahdar* from the 32nd Pioneers, was a special friend. The first time I spoke to him I said, "How long since you went on pension ?" He spoke with a very deep voice down in his boots. "Ho ! Ho ! Ho ! *Sahib*, eleven years. Ho ! Ho ! But when the War got serious father says to me, Get out to the wars, I won't have you young fellers loafing about the farm." Bless his old heart !

Then a mighty fine idea came to someone in India, and it was decided to recruit Labour Corps from the Indian prisons. Men were to gain remissions of sentence and the like for good service. A great many such Corps eventually came, their own jailers being usually their officers. Lieut.-Colonel William Byam Lane, of the Indian Medical Service, a great authority on the psychology of the Indian criminal and jailbird, came in charge, eventually being appointed Inspector of Jail Labour Corps. Under his advice the men got

the treatment that kept them happily at work, and all they did was admirable. They saved the situation. But the demands for labour increased continuously, railways, embankments, roads, ports, barracks, all screamed for more. Eventually when General Grey wanted to build a vast basin, I agreed to his asking for 6,000 men from Egypt, and when these arrived we began to show real progress.

Among our resources in this respect was a curious women's colony of runaway wives, who ruled and kept themselves. They went about in gangs and worked well. There was a story current that some officer riding by, had made ribald remarks and found himself off his horse and stripped to his pelt for his pains. We had these ladies at munition work, and I remember one little lass who had half a buttock torn off from the bursting of a Turkish bomb among the debris of battle-field retrieving, but recovered and much appreciated the comfort and kindness of a hospital.

The Arab labour repaid good treatment. It was a sound policy to make them clap their hands, which they enjoyed. "Clap your hands, O ye people!" And meeting a gang of Arabs by land or in boat, I always clap my hands and they at once start clapping and laughing.

NOAH'S FLOOD

And here perhaps I may turn aside to say something of the Flood as described in the Book of Genesis. When ordered to Mesopotamia from Egypt I had paid a pilgrimage to the shrine of Sir William Willcocks at Heluan near Cairo. Sir William, it may be remembered, a few years before the War, had carried out extensive surveys for the first time in history on the Tigris and Euphrates on behalf of the Turkish Government, which desired to re-construct the old Babylonian canal system on modern lines with a view to growing

wheat and settling Moslem immigrants from other parts of the Empire. Old Sir William was good enough to give me all his tracings and levels, and very valuable I found them. Studying those rivers with the theodolite and the lead, one soon realized what an extremely accurate account of the happenings of our own day the Genesis story contained, and how the actual account was nothing more or less than a straightforward description of what happens every year, somewhat stressed by abnormal rain and melting snow. We may assume that Noah was a big landowner, and was restless at the weakening of the government in view of the extensive canal system existing even in his time, which only adequate and central government could keep going. Forewarned he built a large flat-bottomed boat, pitched within and without with pitch, as are the big thirty-ton *baylums* to this day, with bitumen from Hit, and of which six would take a whole mountain battery, as I have seen with my own eyes. The description of the causes of the flood is a remarkably graphic description of the floods to-day, not only as regards the "Gates of Heaven opening," which is obviously enough a graphic description of the heavy rain in the mountains which helped bring down the molten snow, but especially how the "Fountains of the Deep came up." This is less clear till you know the country. Every spring for forty days and forty nights blows the south-west *Shumal*, a strong wind up the Persian Gulf, and it blows the salt sea, which is what Scripture always means by "the Deep," up over the dry flats which lie on either bank of the Shatt-El-Arab for several dry miles, more especially on the west side between the river and the high banks of the desert upland. This stretch is some 8 miles wide on that side alone. Now this water is blown up inland for 60 or 70 miles, so that the city of Basra itself has to be protected by an embankment. This wall of salt

water comes up from the sea and meets the flood water trying to "run off the land" and intensifies the flood each spring, exactly as it did in Noah's days.

Noah's land was, no doubt, high up in the Euphrates in the thickly populated and highly irrigated districts around Babylon. Then came the phenomenal floods from above, which swept away dams and flooded the whole land, so that Noah, with all his breeding stock in their big *baylum*, was swept down 300 or 400 miles, where the floods of heaven met the fountains of the deep, and tossed for some weeks in the great marshes, where I, in my steamer, struggled to get across and find the lost Euphrates in May, 1916. But the story does not stop here. For as I floated on the wide inland sea, I could see the grey mounds of Ur of the Chaldees low down on the horizon, which still showed the steep brick plinths of the temple of the Moon Goddess. Somewhere near here Noah's descendant, Abraham, steps on to the page of history, where the ark stuck on an *ararat*, the agglutinative Sumerian word for a mound, and then when the Shumal stopped blowing, the waters commenced, as they do to-day, to "run off the earth," no longer driven back by the wall of sea water. Further, lest the story be still hidden, let us look at another quaint fact. The Arab to-day calls the space between the Tigris and Euphrates, which is only saved from flood in high river by a man-made embankment, the "*gebel*," but "*gebel*" also means mountain. So when we learn that the river rose 15 cubits or 27 feet, and the "mountain was covered," perhaps the other meaning, *gebel*, was meant, and we have used the wrong translation. The word in Genesis is *Har*, of which the plural is *Harrar*, and no doubt the word in those days had two meanings, as has *gebel* to this day, viz. the high land, which is obviously a comparative phrase. Thus the Scripture story is a remarkably accurate account by

someone well acquainted with the conditions, of an historical event, into which has apparently been woven a good deal more than was ever intended. To-day even a flood in which the rise was 12 feet above normal would have drowned out the whole of the dwellers between the rivers. When we walk into the British Museum to-day and see the recent discoveries from Ur revealing a very highly developed civilization and culture dating from 4,000 years before Christ, we may well expect to learn something ere long of Noah's Flood,¹ something from which the Assyrian King's scribes took the story for their "Deluge Tables" of some 700 years B.C.

Because these things thrilled me, during the voyages which I made on these rivers—25,000 miles in three years on my steamer—I studied very deeply, with theodolite and level assisting, all that remarkably accurate account of early history which men call "Genesis," as well as what books I could get on Assyria and ancient Babylonia, the real Babylonia, as distinct from the quite recent days of Nebuchadnezzar.

Incidentally I was much interested to find myself sending the same messages up the rivers as the good King Hammurabi, the Ama-raphael of Genesis, had done 4,000 years before, as recorded on his tablets, demanding to know why his vessels arrived short of grain, and saying what he would do to marauding Arabs if it did not stop. For "That which has been is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun."

THE PORT

The port development of necessity went on but slowly, owing to the difficulty of getting in material.

¹ Since this was written Mr. Woolley at Ur has dug through 18 feet of flood deposit from a vast flood, to find remains and artefacts below.

But the ditches and swamps at Magil, where the deep channel came under the bank, were filled in, and gradually Sir George Buchanan got his material in and engineers to work.

His plans had all along been to develop this area with proper railway lay-out in rear, and the I.W.T. commenced improving the river steamer wharves just below the main port. Here two ocean wharves were also erected as a start, but the main plan, a continuous wharf of 1,200 feet long, with one or two single wharves above and below, would form the chief work.

Buchanan was getting over suction dredgers from Burma, and when these came the work of making dry ground proceeded apace. The new metalled road would now connect this port with the river front at Ashar, where the earlier developments had taken place. A little later we planned to turn an island above Magil into a special port for the immense amount of firewood that had to be imported from India, for this delightful country for wars did not even run to fuel.

Work on the bar was improved by some light dredging, and an automatic signal station which would indicate the depth of water put up. A proper pilot brig under a pilot master was added for those Arab pilots, who hitherto, essential though they were, had never been under proper control and roster.

A competent staff of harbour masters, serving with military commissions, brought the ocean steamers into the now crowded port, taking over from the Arab river pilots just below Basra. Commander Bingham of the R.I.M., our Port Officer, had now got the harbour routine into excellent order, and by the middle of 1917 we could berth fourteen ocean ships at a time and clear them in three days. I remember a distinguished Naval officer paying us a visit and

being somewhat disturbed at seeing a cavalry officer come on to the bridge and take control of the transport he was on, but he was a Hoogly pilot serving on his commission in the Calcutta Light Horse and posted to the Port Directorate. Buchanan had given way to Colonel Brown, a competent member of a shipping firm in Bombay, who now carried on the completion of Buchanan's design and handled the port traffic on commercial lines, while Bingham himself alone remained in naval guise.

Behind the wharves proper railway sorting fans were laid out both for moving stores down to each class of depot, and for loading for the Euphrates line. A little later there would be a through metre gauge to Amara.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

A metalled bridged road now crossed all the creeks and connected Basra and Ashar, or the "River front" as it was called, with the big inland camp now being supplied with piped water and electric light, which accommodated all the new hutted and tented rest and depot camps and several general hospitals, while a 2-foot tramway line, drawn by steam engines, eventually ran all day to a time table, free for all. Because India had sent us metal that was so hard that we could not roll it in, the water and weight required melting the mud embankment—the sort of thing India would do—we had to make this 6 miles metalled road at the base of cement, and we found that a thickness of 1 foot in the edges and 4 inches in the centre saved stone and met the case of the heavy base lorries. It proved a most economical road, never needing repair.

One day to my horror I found 300 young officers arriving all together and sitting on the quays on their green valises. Also there were orders from the front

not to send them up till wanted. Heavens! What to do with 300 young officers, with nothing to amuse them and only mischief to get into, mischief of the dancing-girl order in the bazaars and narrows of Basra and Ashar. So I ordered an officers' club to be built with a dozen tennis courts and a decent bar and dining arrangements. The Red Cross gave me some billiard tables and the Canteen ran it for us. I wanted to see young officers get to the front fit and cheery, and Brigadier-General Campbell,¹ D.A.G. of the 3rd Echelon, cordially agreed. Our drafts joined their units as fit and lively as grigs, instead of losing as formerly 70 per cent. in struggling up-river.

We also catered for amusement of another sort. The I.W.T. were constructing a large basin with repair wharves and slip-ways, and as the fleet would be so big, efficient workshops were essential. We eventually got several thousand Chinese artificers and machinists from Hong-Kong, Canton and Singapore, and the rows of workshops and machinery were a sight to see. But Chinese labour needed not only Chinese rations, such as puppy dogs and the like, but amusement. I was advised that a theatre complete was what would keep them happy. So I wired to the good General Ridout at Singapore, late of the Royal Engineers, to send me an outfit, which he did, with several lady stars who duly arrived with great crimson Saratoga dress boxes covered with Chinese lettering. But the good General had been over-thoughtful and had sent a big troop of dancing girl etceteras too. These I thought were a bit more than I could control, so we had them pulled off at Bombay and sent back. But the thought was a kind one, though *Des dames aux Camélias* are not desirable at bases.

The hospitals at Amara were beginning to be a sight to see, with their efficient nurses, their good kitchens

¹ Of *Taller*, etc., the Big Eight.

and their effective operating rooms. General Maude was struck by the fact that our sick rarely returned to us, but were used by India elsewhere. As many hospitals as possible, therefore, were now started, so that evacuation to India should only be necessary for the worst cases or to clear hospitals before a big fight.

A visit from General Sir Charles Monro, on his way to take up the command in India, gave us sure promise of more support in the way of material and practical aid from that quarter. And he was good enough to express high approval on all we were doing.

The Naval defence of the mouth of the river was under Rear-Admiral Sir Drury Wake, who usually lived with us at Ashar, where he had a Naval depot and maintained the independent Naval force of gun-boats which co-operated with the Army on the Tigris. These boats of two sizes, mounting four-inch and six-inch guns, patrolled the river and fought up the Tigris when necessary. They certainly knew where the black partridges lurked, of which I had a fair knowledge too, when between intervals of cruises I could land from my S.I. and see to it. My own Headquarters were in the German Consul-General's house at Basra, a brick lower building with a poisonously hot wooden but otherwise convenient upper structure. In the brick portion of the house L. of C. Headquarters worked. Personally I spent much of my time on the rivers, travelling 25,000 miles in the S.I.

The Admiral and I towards the end of 1917 concocted a better system of defence and examination near the entrance to the Shatt, lest neutral ships should drop mines in our fairway as had been done off Bombay, and we had a running-past and examining battery established at Fao, for I thought we should look pretty fools if caught napping. The L. of C. Defence Force had its centre at Amara under Brigadier-General



THE CREEKS OF BASRA

Austin, a very distinguished Engineer of the adventurous round-the-world type.

The nursing service had been very highly developed. At one time India or perhaps the Chief had refused to have nurses, then a few came from India, too few for the work, and were greatly worn. Finally the War Office sent us Miss Beatrice Jones to take command with a competent staff, a popular and diminutive staff officer or secretary known throughout the Army as "Dot," and many another, with a crowd of temporaries and V.A.D.'s which increased to about 700 as our hospitals grew.

Miss Jones was a lady of a passing generation, to whom V.A.D.'s and modern ways were somewhat a trial. We had a talk. "My dear," I said, "life here is hard, quarters are rough, amenities are nil. You must not make thorny rules or they won't obey them. Let them play with the lads when off duty in reason. They have their own mess code of propriety and will keep it if you let 'em alone."

So they were allowed to go up creeks in baylums among the hanging vines, with officers, when off-duty, and I think we had no scandals at all: 357 of them married officers out of 1,300 through our hands, they tell me.

But it was good for Miss Jones to be chaffed, and she was very human and efficient and much to be honoured. But one day she came to tell me that she had 100 more nurses coming. I could not help saying, "My dear, I have not enough creeks for them!" Again *à la guerre comme à la guerre*. They had a hard time in the summer, with only mat huts to live in, and at times terrible rushes of wounded and sick. Alas, good Miss Jones came back later as head of the Civil Nursing Establishment and came to a very sad death, to the regret of all her friends.

GENERAL MAUDE GETS TO BUSINESS

By the beginning of the second week in December, 1916, everything was ready, the troops were thoroughly recovered and tails high in the air. Two Army Corps were in being, two bridging trains were available,¹ one, thanks to a special flair, equipped with widened Army Transport carts, half a pontoon in each, with the lighter British pontoon in lieu of the heavier bullock-drawn Indian ones. Moral was high and expectation flourished.

And they had not long to wait. The Turks, it will be remembered, blocked our progress on both sides of the river, and were now holding a line of trenches across the bends, to which they had gradually switched back from their original position, confident that we could neither manœuvre inland nor force the river. Maude's first set of operations, which lasted from December 13th, 1916, to February 22nd, 1917, aimed at capturing these various entrenched bends, of which the seizing of the crossing of the Hai and isolating the Turks on the right bank was the gambit. On December 13th the Shatt-El-Hai was seized, and the Turkish position on the Hai commanding the crossing captured. The cavalry were then sent a-raiding down the Shatt, while Maude set himself to a good hammer-and-tongs heavy bombardment and attack on the Muhammad Abdal Hasan Bend. The changed conditions as regards artillery and ammunition, which astonished the Turks, were the first sinister indication.

Down the line things went on steadily. New units still poured up the comfortable marching road, and it was a pretty sight on the river between Basra and Amara to see the river steamers moving up and down, the 2-foot 6-inch trains carrying amazing loads of fodder, the Arab dhows in long procession, their

¹ Later three.

sails full of wind, and then some marching corps on the move alongside. For the moment Maude was well satisfied. I had been with G.H.Q. constantly, and we had pushed the little bit of 2-foot 6-inch track right up along the rear of his front and well across the Hai, which we bridged with trestles. The advanced troops were fed by this line, and during the middle of a fierce fight I picnicked with Marshall on frozen meat and apples from Australia, which was a pretty good effort, 300 miles up the Tigris.

Feelings ran very high in the force regarding the treatment that the Turks had meted out to our Kut prisoners, especially the sick, and the entrusting of the marching prisoners to the escort of Arabs.¹ The Arabs of this part of the river were most bitterly hated, for their treatment of prisoners and their murdering of wounded. But it was *more suo*, and at one time the Turkish Commander had suggested an armistice while both sides chastised marauders!

It is perhaps well to remember that the Turks often treated their own troops and especially their own sick little better.

I came down the river early in February without obtaining any hint of further plans. Maude was emphatic that his licence only permitted him to drive the Turks from Basra Province, which ended near Kut. Arthur Money had said "you had better keep in your mind that we may have a hurried advance up-river!" And I did, but it was fairly obvious that they did not quite realize what an extension of line on that winding river, where it was nearly three miles by water for every one marched up, meant. It would be 230 miles by river round cursed hairpin bends for a hundred miles by road that the army must march, and that

¹ For what these prisoners suffered our enduring hatred of the Turks is merited. The Crimean legend of the clean-fighting Turks was largely *Tosh*.

stream would run so fast at the bends that a loaded steamer with barges would take half an hour to do a quarter of a mile.

I spent a week at Basra making such plans as I could for a steamer stunt if they did rush on, even to breaking up the routine—and in river transport routine is the secret of efficiency—for the sake of saving the army from breakdown whatever the aftermath. Then coming up to Amara again I was met with an urgent wire from Money to push up at once as they had crossed the river.

Fortunately General Grey of the I.W.T. was by with his fast launch, and we chucked ourselves into that and sped through at about 21 knots, getting into Sheikh Saad late that night and in the early morning drove through. Sheikh Saad was wild with excitement. In the last few days, viz. from February 11th to 16th, Marshall's Corps had continued its successes and stormed the Turkish trenches in the Dahra bend above Kut. Everything on the right bank of the river was ours and we extended some way above Kut and the great Sanniyat position on the other bank. Then Maude had a daring conception, which he had been cherishing for some time. He would fling a bridge across the bend after ferrying across a covering party by night, and then pour out in rear of the Turks who, hemmed in by the Suwaideh Marsh, would be in a parlous position. With astounding energy the I.W.T. and Sappers had got two motor launches across dry land from Sheikh Saad to the Dahra bend to tow over the bridge, which was assembled after dark. Rowed over by the Norfolk Regiment in the teeth of a hot fire, the covering party of Gurkhas got across, rushed the nearest Turkish works and established a bridge-head. The Tigris was wide and running fiercely. It was perhaps one of the most dramatic and difficult river crossings in history and

at any other period would have set the world agog with excitement. It is the only modern feat of river crossing which can endure as a military classic.

But while this was in progress, Maude had changed the venue and Cobbe's Corps with Vere Bonomie Fane and the 7th Division were hurling themselves at Sannayat, by heavy bombardment and skilful attacks, so that the Turks hardly noticed the bridging. Pinned thus to their front miles downstream, the crossing by Maude came as a complete surprise. Safety lay in legs and, abandoning everything except their arms and their light guns and transport, those Turks marched as they'd never marched before. Marshall's Corps was now across the river, enlarging the river-head area, and getting clear to let the Cavalry Division over. But the Turks, putting up the most stubborn flank and rearguard fight and marching inland as far as possible, escaped overwhelming disaster, though losing many prisoners.

The Cavalry Division failed to destroy them, for several reasons, of which perhaps one was that Maude felt their Commander was an unknown quantity and would not loose him. He never got another chance.

When I arrived on the morning of the 25th, the major part of both Army Corps were across the river with the Cavalry Division, all more or less hugging the bends for water, which was only obtainable from the Tigris.

About 8 a.m. on the 26th (Feby.) I drove up from Sheikh Saad and found advanced G.H.Q. on one of our big paddle-steamers about to move up-river. I was received by Knox, the Q.M.G. and the C.G.S. with open arms. "For God's sake stop him! He won't listen to us and is starting for Bagdad. It can't be done. We can neither feed him nor give him ammunition. He's had a wire from Wullie." The Chief was ensconced on the deck in the bow in a partition made of tent

walls. I was literally pushed in. He sat with maps on his table.

He looked up and winked at me. "They tell me I can't go on. What about it?"

So I said, "Of course you can't get on yet. We cannot feed you or supply you with ammunition. The road is short, the waterway is long. If you move at once, you will have a bad breakdown. If you wait a little, I can guarantee you shall never stop again."

"Very well, when may I move?"

I said, "On March 2nd."

It was a shot made up of hasty calculations, but he was in the mood for something incisive.

"Very well, I'll wait. You won't fail me then?"

"I will not."

"Right! I am going straight on to Bagdad. I've had a wire from the C.I.G.S. My orders were not to go beyond the limits of the Basra Willayat, which happily included Kut, and I can't get anything more, but Wullie has sent me a telegram that is good enough for me. He says, 'I suppose you know the duty of a Commander who has a beaten enemy in front of him.' That's all I want."

He was never afraid of responsibility, this good Stanley Maude, and he had a few pleasant words to say about the communications and how he had been done.

Brigadier-General Nepean, the Advanced Base Commander, was with me, so we at once set about my business and had a long confab with the Q.M.G. and learnt what he wanted.

Steamers were not to go back, but to remain loaded or fill up with supplies and munitions at Sheikh Saad, and to go on to Azizieh and make a special dump there, while a dump was also to be made at Dahra, so that "trains" could fill up via the bridge. Then I ordered all steamers on their way down to stop and

fill up at Amara from reserves there, while I already had every steamer and barge and every mahela I could get on their way. The first few steamers were already on their way up from Sheikh Saad. Nepean and his Headquarters were to move up to Azizieh *en route* to Bagdad, after seeing the dump at the bridge-head moved along, while Colonel Cole, commanding the river-head at Arab Village, was to take over a new Kut section which would include the winding up of Sheikh Saad and clearing the battlefields, and eventually move to Kut, where we were going to take the 2-feet 6-inch track and lay it to Bagdad, which we hoped to take up below Amara and replace with the metre gauge.

I had very strict orders given to the skippers of vessels to take no orders and *to refuse to be flagged into the bank*¹ by divisions and brigades who thought they were starving. Where there was an Indian skipper I put a British Army officer on board to support him. The Q.M.G. knew exactly where the starvation-point of each division was, and if the vessels got to where he wanted them, viz. Azizieh, no one would starve. All was well. My own steamer had now arrived with her hold full of canteen stores, and I could see from her high bridge steamer after steamer smoking down the winding bends towards Amara. It was a cheering sight and I now moved up with a huge convoy of stuff coming along behind, to the satisfaction and amazement of the Army, which I could see in long columns moving North, the snow-clad Persian Hills behind them.

Down the river the excitement was great. The convalescent became super-fit, the sick clamoured to be convalescent. No steamers even needed repairs! And the tugs tugged day and night. The magic wand of success had stimulated the harmonies of animate

¹ A point to remember in future in river-work.

and inanimate nature and the ancient rivers re-echoed to the rattle of paddles and the chunk of tugs.

During this tense period I received a personal wire from Sir John Cowans, saying that the Premier was very anxious and could I guarantee to keep Maude supplied—I see Colonel Repington's diary alludes to the receipt of my reassuring reply.

BAGDAD

Bagdad was not to be occupied without a very fine feat of arms, the forcing of the Diala River, which ran from the Persian Hills into the Tigris a few miles below Bagdad, by the 13th Division. It was crossed from the 8th to the 10th March, and on the 11th the Army entered Bagdad in time to restore order in the city. And not before it was needed. The Arabs and Kurds had already got into the famous covered bazaars, and were beating in and prizing open the shuttered shops. The law-abiding inhabitants were in terror, and the girls from the Christian schools had been hurried to a house on the river at the end of the city nearest the oncoming British. But the latter were sweeping up on both sides, while European troops poured into the city and marched through the great New Street which Kallil Pasha happily but ruthlessly had cut through the centre. It did not take many hours before order was restored and a strong line formed north of the city on both sides of the river, looking up the 70 miles of the German railway which had been constructed towards Mosul, and up which one-half the Turkish forces had retired.

A day or two later I steamed into Bagdad too and found myself sidling into a bank where the girls in the school rushed out to welcome us, to the amusement of the younger members of the Staff. G.H.Q. was installed in the old British Residency, which the Turks had turned into a hospital and left in the most

appalling state. General Maude took up his residence in the house of a British merchant on the banks of the Tigris, in which Marshal Von der Goltz had resided,¹ and at once proceeded to operate vigorously against the Turks, who were firmly posted in the Jebel Hamrin, communicating with Mosul by road on the hither and further sides of this range. Between March 14th and the end of April a succession of victories on the right bank of the Tigris had secured Samara, and the northern terminus of the German line with all the standard-gauge rolling stock. On the left bank the Turks had been driven across the River Adhaim and out of Deli Abbas on the Jebel Hamrin and touch made with General Baratoff and his Russian Cossacks at Kizil Robat at the bottom of the descent from the Persian plateau. The Army was now in a position to consolidate its gains and rest for the worst of the hot season.

Early next autumn (1917), General Maude began again. On the Euphrates General Brooking captured Ramadi with great éclat, and a successful cavalry charge by Cassels of several squadrons in line rode over an open trench full of Turks. Cobbe on the Tigris drove the Turks back to Tekrit.

The whole of the area on both banks of the river was now made the "advanced section" of the L. of C., with rail-head commandants at each rail-head. This was at first at Samara only. But the 2-foot 6-inch line had come into Bagdad from Kut, the metre gauge had been laid in its stead from Qurna to Amara, and very shortly after this gauge took the place of the 2-foot 6-inch between Kut and Bagdad and the light line was then laid out to Sharaban at the foot of the Jebel Hamrin, and also across from the advanced base, on the right bank to the Euphrates. The advanced base was now established in two halves—one not far from Bagdad on the right bank, to supply troops

¹ And in which he too had died.

on the Samara line and on the Euphrates, to which river were now moving the 15th Division from Nasarieh via Basra and the Tigris; the other at Hinaidi for the maintenance of Marshall's Corps on the Persian side.

THE DEATH OF GENERAL MAUDE

In the middle of Maude's winter offensive came the great tragedy. I had just arrived in Bagdad, bringing with me to visit him a well-known American War Correspondent, Mrs. Martin Egan, who had been allowed to come up on behalf of the *Saturday Evening Post*, on the plea that the United States had heard all about the earlier failures, and nothing of the great recovery.

Maude hated feminines messing about, but in this case gave way. I handed Mrs. Egan safely over to him, after asking her to realize one afternoon that she, an American citizen, was sitting on the bridge of an armed steamer on the Tigris with a British General and his Staff singing "Yankee Doodle," and watching the sun set over Babylon! That night we all went with the Chief to an entertainment given in his honour by the *Alliance Juif*, an educational body. For the first time in the history of Bagdad the Jewish women came unveiled, and a good-looking lot o' faggots many of them were. The Jewish children, of various ages, performed, the principal items being *Le Médecin malgré Lui* in French and selections from *Hamlet* in Arabic. During the evening coffee was handed round. We all partook, but General Maude alone took milk. Next morning he was down with cholera, and cholera in its severest type. Cholera was about, the assistant Military Governor had it too, and there were cases, but nothing happily in the nature of an outbreak.¹ But, alas, Maude had worn himself to a shadow all that

¹ It was the fashion to say he was poisoned. He *might* have been given infected milk, which none of us took. To me it seems the barest barrack yarn.

summer, "the galloping General" the men called him with some enthusiasm, and he had not the strength to fight against it and passed away in the height of his prestige on November 18th. Highly strung and a worrier, he took all he could out of himself. On the other hand he was distinctly a fighting man, which some of them are not, and not only that, but having hit his enemy very hard, he wanted to butt him again before he recovered, which is the essence of the military spirit that brings victory. He had a very great knowledge of all military subjects, had all the strong points of a Guards' Officer. To me he was a very lovable character, and I saw little of that tiresomeness which so tried some of his Staff. He was a man who did not need, for instance, and did not know how to use a C.G.S., and Arthur Money was wasted on him. What he needed was a penciller. But then everyone has his own way, and so long as he can deliver the goods in the way of victory we must accept his ways. *Requiescat in pace.* We buried him in the big cemetery north of Bagdad in the midst of some of his soldiery in that curious acre where Brahmin graves, Sikh graves, Moslem graves and British graves lay in one labelled herbaceous border. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* "And the falling of the leaves was for the healing of the nations." Overhead by some strange chance came enemy planes.

Then after the manner of the Army, the last post gave way to the jaunting march. The dead are buried, on with the job! And Lieut.-General Sir William Marshall, whom I had heard described by a very high authority indeed as a "great little" fighting soldier, took over the command and set about the business. Gillman, who had just come to us as a Divisional Commander, was translated as C.G.S., for Arthur Money had broken down and for a short space General Hopwood had filled the vacancy.

And the work of downing the Turk went on, while ere long we sent two of our best Indian divisions back to Palestine. Service under Marshall and his Staff was just as agreeable as it had been under Maude, and my work meant the perfecting day by day the rearward arrangements that allowed the Army Commander to bring all Mesopotamia under his control.

Our fashionable period was over, and to Marshall came the task of carrying on a steady campaign, with that fighting determination and sound sense which the Army itself holds in such high esteem, and the end was Mosul and the whole Turkish Army and its German *delicatessen*.

THE PROLONGED LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS

The taking of Bagdad had doubled the river distance of our communications, and though the constructing of the metre gauge was going to help us, still we wanted more steamers. Then we got some vessels of even 6-foot draft from the Ganges and staged them, and all the while our own construction yards were fast putting together barges and tugs, and a few small stern-wheelers. The Narrows were lit by electric light to admit of continuous travel and most of the larger steamers had searchlights.

But some excellent hospital steamers of ordinary type with double-decker barges had arrived, and also ambulance trains for the metre gauge and eventually the standard gauge, so that the evacuation of the sick was done in great comfort. Electric lights, fans, pumps and ice machines were now in ample quantity. At the port itself the wharves grew apace. Then we had a Mackensen scare and orders from Home to prepare for several more divisions, while masses of heavy guns and ammunition arrived. I found it necessary to erect a vast wired and defended square,

with railway lines running thereto, in the desert a couple of miles outside Basra, as we could neither accommodate it nor was it safe within the port. All the way up-river we had erected oil tanks, as many of our new steamers burnt oil from Abadan. Tin plates for kerosene and petrol were our trouble, and eventually by arrangement the Army took over and augmented the tin-plate factory of the Oil Company and got an adequate supply of plates, rationing their civil oil trade.

By the beginning of 1918 we were delivering some 3,500 tons a day at Bagdad, compared with 250 tons a day in 1916 only 250 miles out of Basra. Eventually we had as big a flotilla as the world has ever seen under one management, and the Army Commander could now call any tune he chose and we could maintain him.

There came to us also from the Cossack Division no less a person than the 1929 Lady Mayoress,¹ then the Princess Alexandra Lieven, with her companion Mademoiselle Smöten, who had been nursing in the Cossack ambulances. The Princess in fur busby and khaki, a-riding a mustang, but the ladies were very sick and we sent them to Lady Willingdon at Bombay. The Bolshevik trouble had just begun, and the Princess found herself destitute and with no knowledge of the fate of relatives, who were believed destroyed. As soon as they were well, they returned to nurse in the civil hospitals at Basra, and after the War came to India and nursed a while in the frontier medical missions at Dera Ismael Khan, while no one heard the bells ringing "Turn again, Whittington."

A large number of refugee Russian officers now came through, escaping from the Caucasian Army, those whose epaulettes had not been nailed to their shoulders. I had a special depot for them, and some of the colonels

¹ Lady Studd.

came to dine occasionally. Men destitute and void of hope, yet debonair. Contrary to orders, I used to make them a small allowance. Finally we sent them to Vladivostock to join Admiral Kolchak, and I make no doubt most of them were eventually put through a hole in the ice.

They were a pathetic crowd and many fine soldiers among them. Later, in Teheran I saw the money-changers' bowls full of crosses of Vladimir and St. Anne, sold that their wearers might live.

Among them later came General Paulotzoff and his new wife, a pretty enough lady with four little despatch boxes with four French dresses of the exiguous type. He had been commanding the garrison in Petrograd at the time of the Lenin *coup d'état* and had many tales of the follies of Kerenski and how no one would bell the miserable Bolshevik cat. He then had commanded a Cavalry Corps with Alexieff in South Russia. He spoke excellent English, knew London well and was on his way to some coffee estate in Kenya that he had acquired. They stayed with me for three or four days, and were vexed that I would not allow them to play polka with my Staff, for their funds were low.

THE DUNSTER FORCE

But about this time came a very different lot through my hands. A few officers and a posse of the most wonderful selected N.C.O.'s from the Army in France of all kinds, Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, British of the British Isles, all with "military medals" and the like, originally sent to organize and officer the Armenian Army now that Russia had gone. But they were late for the Fair. Tiflis had bolshevized and they became the "Dunster Force," which largely acted as famine relief in Persia and eventually went on to the gallant fiasco at Baku,

which General Dunsterville himself has described so well.

It is not part of this story to tell more of it, except that this party struggled up through Persia to the Caspian in part fulfilment of the policy of preventing the Pan-Turanian movement spreading across to Central Asia. An entirely fresh Line of Communications was now laid from my advanced section railhead at Kanaqin on the frontier of Persia. After some discussion G.H.Q. thought that my responsibility was enough, and decided to operate this as a separate organization, and placed it under Lieut.-Colonel Lakin, a most competent and wise officer, who managed it admirably.

In pursuit of this policy a great motor road was run up into Persia, and Major-General De Candole, a railway magnate from the Argentine, came to see what was wanted, bringing out stone-crushers and rollers. The Dunster Force eventually was reinforced from Bagdad, and when the War came to an end, the Mesopotamian Command had garrisons and a L. of C. right through to the Caspian with the striking force at Kasvin, and no doubt this policy did in some sort keep Bolshevism out of Persia and did also, to some extent, damp down Pan-Tatar intrigue and propaganda.

GENERAL MARSHALL'S FINAL OPERATIONS

Happily the great German push to drive us from Bagdad did not develop, no doubt because of Allenby's advance, and so Marshall set himself to clear the Turks from the province of Mosul and the rest of the Jebel Hamrin, and gain control of the fertile Kurdish district of Sulimanieh.

The operations which Maude had been planning for the winter of '17/18 consisted of first driving the Turks from the Jebel Hamrin and from Kanaqin, which was duly done by Raleigh Egerton, who had succeeded

for a while to Marshall's Corps. It was in January that the Dunster Force went through in the snow, and from March 26th to the 31st Brooking on the Euphrates advanced and took Khan Bagdadi after a smart fight, securing over 5,000 Turks with some few Germans and 12 guns.

The hot weather of 1918 was very severe, and the force lay quiet a while after the despatch of troops to Palestine, since not only the two divisions went, but many Punjabi battalions sent off strong companies to form the nucleus of the new battalions which were forming in Egypt. A portion of the force also was far up in the Persian Hills. In early autumn, however, Marshall was in a position to move. General Fanshaw had succeeded Egerton in the IIInd Corps.¹

On the east of the Tigris this Corps now moved up the road at the foot of the Kurdish Hills through Kifri, Tuz Qurmatli to Tauq, captured some 2,000 prisoners and 15 guns, and thus gaining control of Sulimanieh. Part of these losses were incurred by a cavalry charge after the interception of a retiring body of Turks.

Things were nearing the end everywhere, though no one knew it. Allenby's great successes were now blazed abroad, the Turkish minds were shaken, and it was high time to try and gain possession of Mosul, so important a part of any future Mesopotamian State. On October 24th Cobbe led his Corps up the Tigris, driving the enemy from his position across the west Gorge and opening the way to Mosul. A force under General Lewin on the east occupied Kirkuk, while General Cassels with the cavalry forced the Tigris 14 miles above Sherqat, and interposed between the Turks facing Cobbe and Mosul. After much fighting the whole Turkish force was surrounded, and on October

¹ This was by the Cavalry Fanshaw. (There were three Fanshaw Generals.)

30th Ismail Haqui Bey surrendered with his 643 officers, 10,679 men and 50 guns with over 2,000 animals. Cassels then pushed on and occupied the hills opposite Mosul, while Lewin attacked Altun Kupri. That was the end of the Turkish force in Mesopotamia, of which actual prisoners in our hands totalled 45,445, with 250 guns and 224 machine guns. And with this crowning victory came the Armistice.

Little remained to be done except on the L. of C. The advanced section, continually pushing on its rail-heads in several different directions, had been able to meet all requirements with great elasticity, and its ramifications ran to all points of the compass. During the last few months an interesting development had been the making of a standard gauge line from Bagdad to Babylon and Hilla, chiefly to tap the natural resources of that fertile portion of the Euphrates Valley, and to ensure the supply of a force which protected that most important of works, the Hindia barrage.

During the last twelve months, General Stuart Wortley, our new Q.M.G., had been very actively concerned with the development of the local resources, for which a special directorate had been formed. It was important to reduce the demand for tonnage and to purchase what we could locally. The Arab farmers joyfully participated in canal work, used new implements to agriculture, and set themselves heartily to work pumps and the like. In Basra I did the converse, purchasing many thousand tons of dates for the Food Controller to go home in empty store-ships.

Mention should be made of the work that the I.W.T. had to do in improving the continuous navigation of the Tigris, and also in getting some small craft across on to the Euphrates to deal with the local produce and bring it in to our railhead and Fallujah and Hilla.

The bringing of the troops home, especially the Europeans, was a big business. We established a good waiting camp below Amara, to which the 13th Division came first, and to their surprise found a new ground with a canteen and complete arrangements awaiting them, which was used in succession and from which troops could come down by rail as transports were ready for them. The new subsidiary port of Nahrumar was chiefly used for returning troops, which would keep them free of crowded Basra. Good canteen arrangements kept the waiting troops content, but the glory of the garden was the de-lousing installation, which fitted the soldiery for their return to the bosoms of their families.

But before I leave the Tigris at war, I would make acknowledgment once again to those who helped me through in my share of the victory, the manna-makers and the keepers of ravens. First my three deputies, Brigadier-General Offley Shore, the most picturesque figure and brilliant mind in the Indian Army, who left me to go to Tiflis on special service, and passed away soon after the War. The good Brigadier-General Sullivan of the 36th Sikhs, who came to me from the taking of Kiaochao, a wise old bird after my Irish heart, but whose health did not last. And then came Brigadier-General Sutton, the dear Mutton of the Coldstream Guards, a tower of quiet common sense and discipline, who was my I.G.C. in the period after the War, and died suddenly recently while Lieut.-Governor of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. When folk had to be bitten, as occurred occasionally, it was my deputy's duty to do it. Offley would go down the offender's throat spurs and all, Sullivan would scourge them with sarcasm, while Sutton, after the manner of the Guards, would listen with charm till he was quite sure that he had the right dog by the leg, and then he would throw him and trample on him.

Brigadiers-General D'Arcy Brownlow and Nepean, both of the Indian Army, held the base and the advanced base respectively, and both were big jobs. Two Gordons and a Gordon-Brown held the sections, all men of tact and character. There were three remarkable Staff officers: St. John, my first A.Q.M.G.; Venning, D.A.G.M.G. at the Base; Alexander of the Cokies at the advanced base—all big men, all Staff College men, all Indian Frontier soldiers. Of the silver and the copper there were many. General Grey and the I.W.T. and G.R.B. Stokes Roberts, Director of Works, were winners every time. To all my eternal acknowledgment.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MESOPOTAMIAN COMMAND, 1919

LONDON ONCE AGAIN

THEN after Christmas, when the arrangements for de-lousing and otherwise making the Army fit for its return to civil life had been completed, I asked for a month's leave and said I was then quite prepared to come back and tidy up after the War. So I slipped off for Suez with Master Vicary to take care of me, and a very exciting and interesting Home-coming it was after close on three years' absence. The Canal with the great base at Qantara specially fascinated me, as I ran through from Suez to Port Said. Here we met the vast liner which was one of the great torpedo-dodging fleet on the fast run from Toronto to Alexandria or Suez. And a comfortable, nay luxurious change it was, after three years of the Tigris. Our journey was cheered, especially for Augustus (A.D.C.) and Vicary, by some of our nurses and V.A.D.'s, released from the Tigris too, for whom return, after years of the hard work of the hospitals in a trying climate, was a whirl of excitement.

Running into Victoria there were wives awaiting us, and it seemed as if three years had been but days, as women porters whirled us into our cabs. London was more than crowded, but the good Helen Hay and her remounting husband took us into their flat. Next day I had a warm welcome from Jack Cowans, but was disconcerted to be told, "You are to succeed me here on Tuesday." I gasped. My ambitions turned me

towards Mesopotamia and the East, but phew! "The Army Council and Q.M.G. to the Forces!" That rather filled my imagination. "What about Travers Clarke, Q.M.G., of the great Army of France?" I asked. "Oh, that has been settled. He is younger than you. He is to be Disposals Commissioner and succeed you in three years' time. Come to-morrow and we will see the Secretary of State, who will offer you the job."

I rather felt myself in a whirlpool I had not looked for, and then I went to see the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who also said, "You are to come here, we hope; you are the General Staff nomination, we want someone with General Staff experience who will work with us."

On the strength of this I booked a provisional flat at Whitehall Court till we had time to turn round. Next day I was taken to see Mr. Churchill, but after talking a good deal about Mesopotamia I was not offered the Quartermaster-Generalship, but gathered—which I liked much more—that I was to return. "I don't know who's been getting at the little beggar," said Jack; "yesterday he seemed to have made up his mind."

But apparently Mr. Lloyd George was responsible and very properly on the ground that only the Q.M.G. in France could realize the millions of surplus stores lying there, and he had turned very properly the scale for Travers Clarke. But it was some time before I was told this, and it rather kept us on the hop and prevented one enjoying one's holiday in quiet. Then I had to receive Knighthood and the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Bath at the hands of His Majesty, and also the order of the Star of India, of which I was a Companion, all very stimulating and exciting.

Then I was told that I was to return to Mesopotamia

and take up the Commander-in-Chiefship there, which was more than I expected, and thoroughly intrigued and delighted I was. I had a stimulating and amusing interview with Henry Wilson, who impressed on me the necessity of making the Mosul frontier defensible against the Turk. "God knows what the Frocks will do at Paris and you may have to show a strong front." I saw Mr. Churchill again, who told me I must organize levies and try and get the troops home as soon as possible. But I tried to represent that we lived on a volcano there, unless some definite world policy could soon be announced. But who cared for volcanoes then!

I had not been three weeks at Home before I was asked to get back to Mesopotamia at once, as Sir Alexander Cobbe, who was in temporary command, was none too fit. Then Jack Cowans announced that he would come with me on behalf of the Dutch Shell, and very good news it was, as his company would be delightful. So I had just time with my wife to make some post-war arrangements for my children's education, enter the boy for two or three public schools, spend a week with my wonderful old mother, to whom all the world was a playground, and then rendezvous in London. My wife, who had been in the seventh heaven of excitement at the prospect of Whitehall, was pretty disappointed, but I had promised that she should come to Bagdad in the winter. Poor dear, eight solid years of our married life had been spent by me in the field, twice in spells of three years!

Before I went I received a message that His Majesty would like to see me and I had a wonderful and gracious interview. His Majesty, full of questions about Mesopotamia, had also amusing stories of many things, and I came away feeling that magic touch which must be a heritage of the Stuarts.

THE TIGRIS ONCE MORE

For Jack Cowans the world made passage easy. A leading lady in Jack's affections saw us off with her Peke at eight of the morning, and her husband met us in Paris and gave us dinner. Jack's staff-work was always complete, but at Marseilles we found that our ship had a case of typhus, and, to our annoyance, that a sort of emigrant ship had taken her place, quite unfit for the Eastern trip. There were many odd rumours, especially of the indiscipline, not only of returning troops, but of the hasty enlistments for the newly-raised regular Army. The trip to Bombay was pleasant enough, in spite of the ship. Jack, who of course found an affinity on board, took greatly to Vicary, my staff-officer. At Bombay I received a summons to go to Simla to see the Chief while Jack stayed at Government House. I found a remarkable state of affairs at Simla. The Punjab rebellion was beginning and secretaries to Government in the defence force were patrolling the mall as corporals. The good S.I. was waiting for us at Basra, though, alas, no Yukon on the bridge, and we were happily on the way to Bagdad, while the ex-Q.M.G. rejoiced to see in the flesh all that we had written him of, and was good enough to marvel. At Bagdad I found General Cobbe eager for our arrival that he might get away, and ill enough he looked. I was delighted to find Brigadier-General Stewart as my C.G.S. and my old friend Charles Battray as my D.A. and Q.M.G., soon to be relieved by the trusty and efficient Percy Hambro. There was heaps to do; the force under my Command consisted of the 16th and 17th Divisions under Major-Generals W. Leslie and T. Fraser respectively, the Cavalry Division under Major-General R. Cassels, a force of close on a division up in North Persia, half a dozen more batta-

lions on the Tigris and Euphrates and a good many odd Army troops. There appeared to be a good deal on hand, and the odour of trouble hanging about. Up in the Elburz Mountains Brigadier-General Claude Bateman-Champain was finishing off a rising of the tribes, roughly dubbed Jangalis,¹ and far up the Euphrates the Arabs were very restless. Cobbe had more or less arranged with the War Office the size of the immediate force to remain, but I soon got telegrams urging me to reduce further. This I was not prepared to do till I had got a better grip of the situation, but there were a good many expensive Army units, signal and artillery, which were not wanted now that regular enemies were absent, and these I proposed to reduce at once. Sir Percy Cox was now British Minister at Teheran, where his mastery of diplomacy and his inscrutable countenance were a remarkable asset, and the always efficient Arnold Wilson was my Civil Commissioner.

The first thing to be done, however, was to go up to Mosul and study the situation there close to the Turkish frontier and the restless Kurdish Hills. Jack Cowans was to come with me as far as Sherqat and get a glimpse of the Quaiarah oilfields. Here I said good-bye to him and found myself at General Fraser's headquarters in the Jacobite Patriarch's residence in Mosul, from the roof of which Dr. Wigram showed me the mounds of Nineveh across the Tigris and the distant peaks of Tiari and Julamerk from which his beloved Assyrians had been driven. I found that Fraser had a brigade away at Kirkuk and beyond, keeping up communication with the little Kurdish State of Sulimanieh, where the Agha Sheik Mahmud had been installed as ruler *pro tem.*, with some British officers assisting in the administration and the training his levies. Fraser had one brigade and some artillery at

¹ Men of the jungles.

Mosul and another brigade at Baiji and Sherqat on the Tigris. This seemed a good enough distribution and reduced the amount of supplies required for the frontier guard at Mosul.

THE MILITARY SITUATION

I did not quite like the military situation. The force in North Persia was fairly strong and could look after itself. Its headquarters were at Kasvin, some 70 miles from Teheran, and occupied by us under the same general War Convention that had brought Turks and then Russians and finally ourselves into Persia at all. Kasvin was 400 miles from our Mesopotamian frontier at Kasr-i-Shirin, at the foot of the great Persian Plateau. The British Navy were now being withdrawn from the Caspian, another of our remarkable far-flung fronts, and being handed over to the ineffectiveness of that broken reed Deniken. At Teheran was still the Russian Cossack Brigade under the remarkable old Georgian, Colonel Staraselski. Its officers were largely those of the old regime, and how or what way they might jump in reference to Persian politics I could not tell. I did not like our position with no mounted troops or fast-moving artillery at Kasvin, from which they had been withdrawn on account of supply problems and demobilization. So I determined to get up there as soon as I could and see for myself.

We were strong enough all along the rivers, but I could not reinforce Mosul with the railway at Baiji, and most of the war-time lorries gone. Also I found existing several of my pet abominations, distant outposts, put out for political reasons, but hostages to fortune in the event of local trouble. You have to spend energies rescuing beleaguered outposts when you should be concentrating and striking at the heart of rebellion. The worst of these was Deir-es-Zor, far

up the Euphrates, 400 miles from any support, whose original *raison d'être* was to keep open the road to Damascus, and incidentally give the British a free hand in settling the Damascus States frontier. It consisted of some levies with British officers and a detachment of armoured cars. Nor did I like the garrisons at Chemchemal, 200 miles from Baiji, in the hills near to Sulimanieh, far ahead of the brigade at Kirkuk, nor another away up in Northern Kurdistan at Amadia, 100 miles from Mosul. Again I did not at all fancy a line of small posts along the Lower and Middle Euphrates, especially that at Rumeitha. On the other hand we were playing a political hand, and I agreed with Arnold Wilson that we must keep them out for a bit, but warned him that if I saw real trouble I would get them in sharp and then hit out.

The troops out along the Euphrates at Hit, Rumeitha and Samawa were found from General Leslie's Division, whose headquarters with one brigade were at Bagdad. One Cavalry Brigade was at Bagdad and the other was up with Fraser at Mosul.

The Air Force was good enough, save that the type of planes then available had great difficulty in getting up in the hot weather in the rarefied air. Reconnoitring over the rugged Kurdish Hills was a peculiarly dangerous matter with rather uncertain planes, and I was loath to call on the force more than absolutely necessary.

The first step I took was to push the railway all I knew to Sherqat, which would bring me within 70 miles of Mosul. Henry Wilson wrote to me privately to push it hard and disregard official wires from the War Office to stop! He realized better than most what was going on in Turkey and how with the Greek folly I might have the Turks on me in some strength.

The situation with our own troops was not without anxiety. All our Europeans were due for demobilization, and were none too pleased at staying. The

mechanics especially, as was to be expected, were the most Bolshie inclined. Sir Alexander Cobbe had been among them with something of the human touch and the excitement had quieted down, but we had to consider seriously whether in the last resort we should have to steady matters with Indian troops. I also made a point of seeing as much as I could of the machine shops and the European details generally. New battalions were on their way to take up the permanent British garrisons. The entirely academic and quite unreasoning and inhuman scientific demobilization which had emanated in the brains of the clever young men at Home had been responsible for much discontent before it was dropped. It was wise enough in theory to get the key men home first to restart industry, but human nature was only prepared to admit that those who had been longest enlisted should go first.

I find that on May 5th, 1919, a few days after assuming command, I wired to the War Office to say that I was fully in accord with General Cobbe's view of the volcanic possibilities of the situation and was impressed by the following :

1. Increasing unrest on the Kurdish border.
2. Possibilities on Lower Euphrates as shown by recent unrest there.
3. Well-armed state of the tribes in Lower Mesopotamia.
4. Increase of Wahabism among Ibn Saoud's tribes (Hajd).
5. Increasing intrigues of agents of the Sherif and Committee of Union and Progress (Turkey).
6. Unsettling effect of events in India (Punjab rebellion) and Egypt.
7. The inefficient state of several units of this force while in a state of transition (i.e. demobilization).

I added that, without in any way suggesting there was cause for alarm, we dare not disregard the possibilities of the situation.

This telegram gave me some firm ground on which to resist demands for reduction of my force. Since I have read Sir Henry Wilson's account of the Cabinet's difficulties and indecision, I am only surprised I got all the support I did.

THE NEW BRITISH UNITS

The new British units were soon on their way. Some day someone with a pen will tell of the remarkable feat that the Adjutant-General to the Forces performed in re-raising the British Regular Army. It is forgotten that the moment the War was over, practically every man, almost all the N.C.O.'s and most officers were due for demobilization. Yet in British India 60,000 Territorials needed replacing, while Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, the Black Sea, the Army of the Rhine, all required garrisons. At least 250,000 men were required and required immediately. Normally about 36,000 men a year were obtained, none too easily, from the civil population for the Regular Voluntary Army.

However it was done, we got them, and through the early autumn new units began coming out to me. But I had another trouble, peculiar perhaps to our conditions.

Many of the Indian Army officers and those of the departments had not seen their wives for years, and they could not be spared for leave. I told the War Office that I was quite prepared to have the ladies out, if they would face camp life. It was a lesser evil than neurotic unsettled officer cadres, of which I had seen a good deal. The War Office replied that in the present state of public opinion I could not have officers' wives unless I was prepared to take the "families" of the

new regular units. I considered that if the officers of my force were to settle down to a prolonged garrison after two or three years in the country, the coming of their families was important. So I said I was quite prepared to handle the families of the new rank and file too, if they did not mind tents, and that I would camp them in North Persia if need be in the summer, but that I would of course rather be without them. Those were days when fear of democracy swayed the politician. The Cabinet had already turned a Kerenski colour over more than one episode and they insisted on all families coming. Now an officer's wife, especially an officer's wife from India, would be no trouble. They are well used to scant comfort and hard fare, but rank-and-file wives want much more done for them. However, I figured that if I could deal with 500 sick and wounded, 400 or 500 soldiers' wives and children would not matter. So I agreed. I should not have done so had I realized how the delays in Paris in settling the future were to destroy the temper of the countryside.

Further, H.M.G. had already agreed that the officers of the Political Department, i.e. of the civil administration, of whom there were a large number, should have their families. So that as most of them were drawn from the Army, some equality of treatment was important.

Eventually officers' and soldiers' families arrived, and considering the way the rebellion of 1920 went, were no very great embarrassment.

JEWES IN MESOPOTAMIA

On my visit to Mosul a garden party was held in the Political Officers' garden at which I should receive the various estimables of the city. Among them was the Chief Rabbi, for at Mosul, as elsewhere in Iraq, Jews were numerous. In fact, I should be inclined to say

that Mesopotamia and the Tigris and Euphrates is the real Jewry of the world. And the Chief Rabbi had recently put forward a strange and intriguing petition. His people, he urged, were Israelites, not Jews, and he knew that the British understood the difference. The Christian Chaldean villagers in the Mosul district did not, and were wont on Good Friday to pelt their Hebrew neighbours with dead cats and rotten eggs ! "Now what," asked that aged Hebrew dignitary, "have the lost tribes to do with the crucifixion of Jesus-ibn-Yusaf ?" "I demand," he had said, "that the British put an end to this injustice." And there was no denying that he had a good cause, for the House and tribes of Israel had nothing to do with the follies of the House and tribes of Judah.

The whole story and idea is of very great interest. The ten tribes were deported by Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, whose capital was Nineveh, across the river from Mosul, and planted by him on the banks of a river described in Kings as Chebar and in Chronicles as Habor. But a river named the Khabur to this day runs into the Tigris from the east, a few miles above Mosul, while another Khabur runs into the Euphrates at about the same latitude. So it well may be that that Chief Rabbi had justice in his plea. Moreover, there is a settlement of Hebrews in Turkoman Kirkuk under the southern Kurdish Hills, who actually talk Hebrew as their household breakfast-table language. Yet Hebrew has been dead these 2,000 years, and but learnt as a classic. It is not often that you will find a living pocket of a dead language.

It would seem that the tribes never were wholly lost, and that those of Israel were to some extent scattered up and down the Tigris and Euphrates, when Judah arrived there, that some did tack themselves on to Zerubbabel and the remnant of Judah that returned, but that many were extremely well off, both Jew and

Israelite, where they were. Indeed, I imagine that Ezra really lies in that blue-domed shrine on the Lower Tigris that we of the Mesopotamian Army know so well, because of his coming back again and again, to whip up more returners. Tens of thousands of Jews and Israelites must have mingled and remained where we find them to this day, in Basra, in Bagdad, in Mosul, in Hit, and in every other town where a day's barter is to be done. "Turn our Captivity, O Lord, as the rivers in the South," is but the cry of those who, knowing but a tideless sea, saw in their wonder the great merchant barges go down to the sea with the current and back from the sea on the tide for 150 miles and more.

Moreover, the Jews of Iraq to this day are red-haired, as was the Iscariot, and often blue-eyed, and often straight of nose if clumsy of nostril, for it was apparently only Judah who got the Hittite or Armenian nose, by going, in the simple language of Scripture, "whoring after Moab." Moreover, if we knew more of that interesting personality at the Sassanian and Arab Courts, "the Prince of the Captivity," that Hebrew Prince Palatine who represented Hebrew matters and had no doubt Hebrew jurisdiction under the great rulers, we should know that it was the remnants of twelve tribes and not two that he represented.

They are comely enough, too, those red-haired Hebrew girls, with their fair skins and their silken *abbahs*, that go out tea-drinking on white asses through the streets of Bagdad o' Sabbath afternoons, as our young officers were quick to realize, and who, if rumour ran right, entered into outrageous intrigues with the younger Turks of the garrison, frown their elders never so severely. But that is another story.

TROUBLE IN THE MARSHES

The good Proemial¹ himself soon began to get at me, not content with the more understanding War Office. Why did I not raise more levies? why did I not at once reduce my garrisons? why did I not assist in reducing the cost of garrison? Rather in vain I replied that I had cut off all the trimmings that were originally left me, but that we were living on a volcano simmering and rumbling below, and answering to the tremors from Paris. That I warned him that a big eruption at any moment might occur, and that Arab and Kurdish levies were being raised as fast as we could, but that they were a very unknown quantity. Eventually a grudging acquiescence came. But *my* master was The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and so I sent Sir Henry a private wire asking if He had seen my correspondence with Proemial. To this came a wire followed by a whimsical letter to the effect that if the Secretary of State chose to deal with me direct, that was his funeral; but I was to be sure and send the C.I.G.S. copies of anything I wired or wrote. And again he impressed on me to get on with my rail to the Mosul Frontier, for *Cher Henri* was a man of vision. And I pushed that line with a will, being scared myself.

But I had also trouble in progress on the Lower Euphrates where one Sheikh Badr, an irreconcilable cup o' tea who lived in the marshes, would not "come in." I had a stout fellow commanding at Nasiriyeh, one Wintle of the Bombay Army, and he with a few aeroplanes and launches and a mounted force on the drier side of the marsh, put it across old Badr fairly successfully.

While Badr's hash was being settled, news came

¹ "Proemial" was the telegraphic address of His Most Sacred Secretary of State for War.

that the operations in the Elburz Mountains against the Jangalis were now over also, and I was about to make my way to Persia and find out a little more of what the Persian Cossacks might be thinking of, when a new and really serious state of affairs arose in Kurdistan.

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT IN IRAQ

Before I turn to the numerous lesser risings which were to keep me and the troops so busy, an outline of the provisional government and our system will be of use. It is a somewhat glorious study, which has been much maligned by pipsqueaks who never knew the problem, and harassed by the ill-balanced enthusiasm of T. E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell.

It is important to realize that the Government of Mesopotamia was essentially by the Turks for the Turks. When the Turkish troops withdrew, practically every Turkish official went too. Any that remained could not be expected to act as officials under British regime. It was necessary to raise up an administration. We also came in to some extent as deliverers. We proposed to set up some form of Arab administration long before the Arab Bureau had come into being in Cairo to study and co-ordinate any Arab policy. The Government of India had long studied and been in touch with the Arab of the Gulf of Lower Mesopotamia. Koweit, and through its chiefs the nearer Sheikhs, had been in touch with British ideas and British policy. With the original Expeditionary Force had come Lieut.-Colonel Sir Percy Cox, long British Resident in the Persian Gulf and credited with being the best exponent of Arab affairs in that part of the world. The only authority for jurisdiction was the Commander-in-Chief, who could only control by proclamation and edict and whose only legal right

was that of the bayonets that had occupied the enemy country. To draft the edicts for the C.-in-C. to issue, to devise a provisional administration in the derelict occupied territory, to do all that the Turkish officials had done and more, it was necessary to set up a complete system. Administration, revenue, justice, trade, quarantine, imports had all to be legislated for, and all in such a manner as would, while inducing the satisfaction of the people of the occupied territories, first and foremost prevent any interference with the work of the troops. As 1914 merged in '15 to '16, as Nasiriyeh, Amara, Sheikh Saad, Kut, were occupied, the area to be pacified, controlled and administered grew and grew. It was necessary to staff this administration. We were fortunate in having with the force Major Arnold Wilson, a brilliant young officer of the Indian Political Service, who had been with the Turko-British-Persian Boundary Commission which had been operating for some period before the War, delimitating the boundary between Persia and Iraq. He and Sir Percy Cox formed the basis of the provisional administration, and to them came some remarkable Indian civilians of the Political Department, Henry Dobbs, Evelyn Howell and several others, while the Chief allowed Sir Percy Cox to draw from the ranks of the Army suitable young men, mostly holding reserve and temporary commissions. Since the safety of the Army was the first consideration, and since there was no cadre of trained Iraqis to furnish a civil cadre, the number of such who could be taken into the more important temporary posts was not many, but a steady endeavour was made to train such, even while the Army fought. Fortunately the cardinal folly that helped to produce the disasters of the first Afghan War, the subordination of the Army to a system of Field deputies, has long disappeared. Sir Percy Cox was the head of a civil department working under the

general control of the C.-in-C., to whom or for whom all orders of Government were addressed.

When Sir Stanley Maude occupied Bagdad, a still more complicated civil question arose. We were now holding one of the great trade and gossip nerve-centres of the East. It was necessary to set up a far more formal administration, to meet the everyday needs of the occupied territory. More and more officers had to be found, sparingly from India, who wanted them all, more freely from the ranks of the Army. Sir Stanley Maude had inherited from his father, the Maude after whom Fort Maude in the Khaiber takes its name, some suspicion of political officers. The old follies had burned deep into Army hearts, and though often unreasoning they are very hard to eradicate. Maude, while worried at the civil detail to which he had to lend an ear, was yet not sympathetic to all that was needed. Where espionage or sabotage was to be feared, it was essential that the needs of the General Staff should be met, but those needs were not always reasonable. There was a measure of friction. Sensible of this, anxious to relieve Maude of as much of the work as possible and to give Cox a better status, a new edict was issued appointing the latter Civil Commissioner with the temporary rank of Major-General, still subordinate of course to the Commander-in-Chief but in direct communication with Whitehall in all but very major policies. Shortly afterwards the exigencies of the situation in Persia, when we had disposed of the Russians in North Persia, called Sir Percy Cox to exercise his diplomatic genius in the troubled atmosphere of Teheran as British Minister there. Lieut.-Colonel Arnold Wilson took his place. This coincided with the need to develop the civil resources of the country to the utmost for the production of military supplies and demanded a formation of departments of agriculture and development which

normally would have waited for more settled times. The civil administration, still further stretched by our crowning victories at Mosul, called forth all Wilson's remarkable administrative acumen. He had gathered round him a posse of young men almost all untrained, of remarkable character, energy and understanding, and through them these vast tracts were controlled, and the work of development and supply was carried on.

These young men too, taking their life in their hands in extending jurisdiction to the uttermost confines of the provinces wrested from Turkey, were a brilliant extemporized galaxy, of whom Great Britain may be inordinately proud. Their influence over the people was more marked than has been shown in almost any history of our Imperialism.

It was to the headship of this provisional system that I as Commander-in-Chief now succeeded. All detail was in Arnold Wilson's hands, and I soon found that our early co-operation at Basra could be as happily continued. Wilson was punctilious in telling me all that he was planning, while relying on me to back him if matters came to a tussle. I had the greatest admiration for his energy and determination and vision, and also for the way in which most of the younger men looked up to him, as hounds to their huntsman. It is no tribute to the acumen of the Foreign Office that so able an officer should "stalk haughtily off the stage" a little later.

POST-WAR CONDITIONS

With the cessation of hostilities there had come no change in the conditions of the occupied territories. The "Frocks" at Paris could not hasten their decision and agreements, but it was very much complicating the situation: as I have said, I could feel the rumbling of the volcano under our chairs. God knows there was enough going on to upset men's minds. The great

rivers are one long street of coffee shops to which come towns-folk, river-folk and desert-folk. To the *sukhs* and bazaars come all the tribes. Talk, argument, discussion, controversy, are the breath of life to the Arab. Everyone must argue. "Why," said the old Sheikh, "we could not even rest content in Eden when we got there." Every ill-winded pirn, every devil current was pirouetting through the bazaars. Pan-Islam, Pan-Turk, Pan-Kurd, Pan-Arab, Pan-Bahinchute vied with one another to stir men's minds.

The administration could but try to keep the ship in the middle of the stream, the car in the middle of the road. Paris gave no sign.

T. E. Lawrence had been pouring forth his hot air, after setting up his jerry principalities of the Hashimite family. King Hussain was, it is true, the only card we had to play, but those behind the scenes knew the futility of his family, rave Lawrence never so madly. They were given their chance and now few so poor as pay them reverence!¹ We in Iraq knew well that the Arab had failed to bear Empire for many a long century and that the work of resuscitation must be slow.

Gertrude Bell, whose judgment never quite came up to her knowledge, babbled of the folly of "Indianizing" Iraq. I have never understood the phrase unless it meant extracting peace and prosperity and law and order from confusion and rapine. Poor Bal-kis was away for a well-earned rest when I returned. I had always laughingly promised to deport her if I came to power, and she would laugh and say, "Oh no, Pasha, you won't need to unless you want to Indianize"; the bee was firm in her bonnet. But she loved the Arab so much and dreamed of so much for them, that she could not see the wood for the trees.

¹ Save only King Faisal, who finding circumstances too strong for him in Damascus was provided with a real throne in Bagdad.

Mr. Philby has openly said that she was responsible for that revolution which I had warned Government was coming. In a manner of speaking he was right, for she, quite without authority, had undoubtedly prated of a solution to the Arab problem which the Allies were not prepared to give and had pulled every illegitimate string she could to have her policy adopted. Then too, late in 1920, I think she saw whither it was leading, to bloodshed and misery untold, which up to now we had saved the country from. All of which does not detract from the *Khatun's* work and daring and knowledge, though I am inclined to think with old Albrecht, my friend of the Staats Artillery, when he said, "There is no place for womans in war."

And so all 1919, while Frocks deliberated and bargained, poor Iraq was heading for disaster, charm Wilson never so wisely or hit I never so hard. And the first broke out in Sulimanieh, followed by trouble throughout Kurdistan.

SOUTHERN KURDISTAN

For temporary purposes of our own, we divided Kurdistan, or rather that portion of the Kurdish Mountains which belonged to the extensive Bagdad Willayat, into Northern, Central and Southern Kurdistan. Southern Kurdistan comprised principally the rich valley within the outer Sewaliks known as Sulimanieh, long famous as the source of some of the best Turkish tobacco and a great source of revenue to the Turkish *Regie* and to its successor the Revenue of Iraq. Because His Majesty's Government and Allies knew little enough of what they would do in the future, and because a nebulous Pan-Kurdish aspiration still hung somewhere on the horizon, it was necessary for us to make provisional arrangements for the country which was quite cut off from the Arab plains of the

Tigris Valley, though these plains were shared alike by Kurd and Arab for the winter grazing.

So we gave temporary authority to one Sheikh Mahmud, one of those turbulent Aghas or semi-religious chiefs, who by means of hired bravados lorded it over their neighbours. To Sheikh Mahmud was sent an officer or two to train his levies and certain political officers to generally assist in establishing his rule and put the revenue on a fair and firm basis.

Further up in Central Kurdistan we had a political officer at Arbil and Rowanduz, while in the North we had a small detachment and political officer at Amadia, an attractive but rather inaccessible centre in the northern portion of the hills in our occupation. Our general policy was to keep such control as the Turkish Governor of the Provinces formerly had, collecting the revenue on Turkish assessments, while seeing that we got it, and generally preparing the way for whatever was to come.

The railhead was at Baiji on the Tigris, where the best part of a brigade under Brigadier-General Morris was stationed. Thence a track lay across what was practically desert for 100 miles, till one came to the foothills and the ancient Turkoman town of Kirkuk, one of the few relics of old Seljuk settlements, and where the inhabitants still wore the "Bluebeard" type of dress and turban. Also as you came into the town, queer little water-mills with towers domed like the turbans were to be seen, and once again I was oppressed with the feeling of having been there before, as I was in Gallipoli. Perhaps some of the old Crimean pictures had shown them too. Or perhaps pictures of Sinbad recalled them.

At Kirkuk, whence Sulimanieh still lay 70 miles further into the hills, the 16th Marathas were in garrison, with a detachment of cavalry and about forty machine-guns of the Machine Gun Corps carried in Ford vans

driven by Burman drivers. Some 30 miles beyond Kirkuk lay Chemchemal in a smiling rice valley. From Chemchemal to Sulimanieh was over 30 miles of very bad road, just practicable for a Ford. Sulimanieh itself was also an open smiling valley which in the early summer was not unlike Kashmir, though warm enough later.

All seemed quiet enough up till May 23rd, when news came that a leader of Persian Kurds, a freebooter across the border, was threatening an inroad. I need not carry the reader into all the mysteries of Kurdish politics and intrigues, but suffice it to say, in the midst of a perfectly peaceful state of affairs, the Kurds from Persia, in collusion with Sheikh Mahmud, entered Sulimanieh, and the Kurdish levies sent against them fraternized with the intruders. Sheikh Mahmud then pulled down the British flag, hoisted one of his own, seized the six British political and levy officers and their assistant, and assumed full charge.

Immediately this was reported, I directed General Fraser, within whose command this area lay, to push up troops towards Sulimanieh, as far as the Chemchemal Plain, both those at Kirkuk and the Brigade at Baiji, and to organize a force to knock out Sheikh Mahmud and rescue the prisoners. For some reason never explained, the officer commanding at Kirkuk thought it necessary ¹ to disregard his orders and push on beyond Chemchemal in an endeavour to reach Sulimanieh with some armoured cars, machine-guns in Ford vans and some mounted troops. The country was extremely difficult, but he penetrated as far as the Tashlujah Pass, 12 miles from Sulimanieh. Here, surrounded and outnumbered, he endeavoured to withdraw, but lost his armoured cars and Fords and

¹ He was in telephonic communication with his brigade and Divisional Headquarters, but it is fair to say that he had been ill with malaria and war strain and was not on his perch.

most of his mounted troops. Uncovering by his action the communications in his rear, important convoys were destroyed and a detachment of infantry and cavalry with another convoy desperately attacked for thirty-six hours. These *contretemps* considerably delayed General Fraser's operations. He eventually, however, arrived in front of the Bazian Pass, the entrance to the Sulimanieh country. Here he was confronted by Sheikh Mahmud with a large gathering of Kurdish tribesmen thoroughly armed and well supplied with ammunition. Many a time before had the Sheikh defied the Turks at this pass. In one of his periodical outbreaks it was usual for the Turks to march up the high road and run their heads against the peculiar wall of upended rock which constituted the outer range like a wall entered by a door. But the experienced British Commander from the Afghan border knows a better game than this. Among the troops with General Fraser was the 85th Burmans, to whom I have referred, three parts Kachin. I had promised to give them a show, and as unwearied troops were scarce, had rushed them up to Fraser. He started them off in a turning movement long before dawn, while at daybreak he moved straight on the Bazian Pass, with some circumstance, exactly as the Kurds had expected. But they had counted without the Kachins, for just at daybreak the little men, out-
"girling" the Gurkhas, rushed in on the Sheikh and his reserve, having scaled the heights and rolled up the Kurds on the flank. The fight did not last long after that. Sheikh Mahmud fell, shot through the liver, his braves were severely handled, and Fraser let loose the 32nd Lancers, to gallop at top speed through the mountains lest the chagrined Kurds should take their vengeance on the prisoners. After a most determined ride, this regiment, led only by their Indian and two junior British officers, galloped into Sulimanieh and

rescued the prisoners, who had suffered several weeks of close and anxious detention.

I imagined that Sheikh Mahmud had been encouraged in his folly by the belief that the British were immobile in the hot season and that the inaccessible Kurdish Hills were beyond our powers. So I thought that we might astonish his weak nerves and generally dispel these ideas if I marched another body of troops right in from the south by some goat-tracks, especially as at Halebja there dwelt a celebrated feminine, by name Adela *Khatun* or the Lady Adela, who was intensely pro-British for reasons divers, who was in some sense beleaguered, and who had given shelter to some of our sore-pressed people.

Accordingly a small mobile column marched northward under one Lieut.-Colonel Body, a stout Territorial officer, with a mountain gun and a platoon of Pioneers and the 10th Gurkhas, all mountaineers of a determined type except the Commander, and he was a man of Kent. The appearance of this column from a very unexpected quarter, over the roughest of mountain paths, did what I wanted—dispelled any mistaken ideas of our lack of mobility, and restored the Lady Adela to her prestige. It finally joined General Fraser.

Brigadier-General Stewart, my C.G.S., and I moved up to Sulimanieh, close on the heels of General Fraser, to congratulate him on what was perhaps the most instructive and efficiently run small war in our history, teeming with every example of error and correction, of political action and the like, and if necessary restrain him in his somewhat natural desire to put it across the politicals! The difficult task of organizing close on 200 miles of communication, the first 90 over a red-hot desert, remarkable only by the thousands of nesting sand grouse, was in charge of Brigadier-General G. F. Sanders, R.E., a fellow cadet and also fellow Staff College student of my own terms. Sanders

had already attained a reputation by his extremely able handling a year or so before of an outbreak of fanatical Shiahhs at Nejef.

I had the pleasure and privilege, under the powers so wisely granted to Commanders, of bestowing, as an immediate reward, a well-earned D.S.O. on Captain Fraser of the 32nd Lancers for his entirely admirable, resourceful and successful defence of his convoy in the hills near Chemchemal. I also had the peculiar satisfaction of giving a distinguished conduct medal to a little Kachin lance-corporal for his gallantry in the attack on the Bazian Pass, and was very mindful, as I have described in Chapter I, of the last time I had doings with these little Mongols of the Chinese border, when I was fighting for my life against them and gaining my own D.S.O. as a lad at their expense.

I might mention that at this time I sent up as a trial 250 selected men from the Bengali Battalion. They were too late to be tested under fire, and I forgot to tell Fraser to engineer a dummy attack on them, but they showed commendable endurance in their march up over the burning plains and in the plenty of hill marching through Kurdistan that General Fraser gave them while beating out the remoter valleys.

Sheikh Mahmud was tried for his life for rebellion and treachery and sentenced to death. I was much urged to carry out the sentence, in the useful process of ridding the world of a quite incurable villain. But I have an old-fashioned idea of justice, and I did not feel that in the peculiar circumstances I was justified in shooting him, or that I was putting Great Britain in the right by doing so. So I commuted it to imprisonment for life, which of course meant at His Majesty's pleasure, and sent him to India. Unfortunately in a more relenting moment Sir Percy Cox, a year later, thinking perhaps that we were abandoning Iraq and that Sheikh Mahmud would at any rate

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be a restraint on Turkish interference, recommended his release. If he has not regretted it, everyone else has, for there have been at least two more of his rebellions since and no doubt more to come. I dare say for the moment the Agha is at refuge with some of his scoundrel friends in Persian Kurdistan.

Perhaps I am more to blame than Sir Percy, for after all his life was forfeit to me by all the rules, and yet it has always seemed to me that there are better things to do with most men than hang them. Kurdish Aghas may be the exception.

NORTH PERSIA, TEHERAN AND THE CASPIAN

With Sheikh Mahmud safely in chains, I thought I could venture to visit my command in North Persia which stretched to the Caspian Sea, and see Sir Percy Cox, who was anxious that I should come up to Teheran where he had just concluded with Vosuk-ul-Doulah, the Persian Prime Minister, the remarkable Anglo-Persian Treaty which, by some mishandling, so soon fell to the ground.

They told me that a Vauxhall car could do the trip, as the lorry road to Hamadan was nearly complete. This was a road started during the occupation of North Persia and the Dunsterville Push, and as it was nearly ready I had somewhat exceeded my orders in actually finishing it, but with more than two brigades in the country I must have roads. The British road ran from the boundary of Iraq, near Kasr-i-Shirin, via Kermanshah to Hamadan, whence a Russian commercial road ran down to the Caspian and on to Teheran.

The first start off took us winding up the mountain-side on to the high plateau of North Persia, a great climb for a motor road, and on to Kermanshah, where Colonel Lakin, Inspector of Communications and O.C. troops as far as Kasvin, met me. At Kermanshah

I dined with the Persian Governor and found my remnant of Persian learnt in India in days long ago would still hold me in stead. Persian nobles kept very good cooks, and plenty of wine, and we feasted accordingly. It was a charming place, this rambling old town with nobles' houses in gardens fringed with Lombardy poplars, for all the world like châteaux in France.

A few miles from the town were the rocks and carvings of Takhi-Bostan, and a little further on the famous rock of Behistun with the trilingual inscriptions in cuneiform far up the stone face.

Except for the glory of the country, and the beautiful gardens which arise where there is water, there was not much to remark on. Here and there some Persian Prince came out with his retainers to meet me, a hundred mounted men with lambskin head-dresses and rifles a-carry. Courtly old gentlemen they were and we exchanged such courtesies as may be. My escort was two armoured cars manned, if I remember right, by Grenadier Guardsmen, so mingled were our forces. And we drove our way to the ancient Ecbatana, which men now call Hamadan. Here the hospitable agent of the Bank of Persia and a charming Irish wife put us up in an English house and garden, and a carpet-dealer waited on my heels. He had something worth buying too, so that I fell.

From Hamadan the roads run to Kasvin, which is 90 miles from Teheran and 130 from the Caspian. Here was my brigade, now commanded by Colonel Wintle, *vice* Champain on leave. A useful brigade with a mountain battery, but with not enough mobility to watch Staraselski's Cossacks at Teheran.¹ Here too was the backlash of Bolshevism in several Russian

¹ Colonel Staraselski was a Georgian who with Russian officers of the Imperial regime organized and commanded a Persian Cossack Brigade. See p. 277.

refugees. There was one admirable family, a mother with several children and two grown-up daughters, penniless, the father, an engineer in Baku, lost. The girls were keeping the family by typing in our offices. Young officers were engaged to them, but I doubt if it went further, and I hope, though I have never heard, that someone gave them a helping hand when we left, for they were high-grade folk and far too good to be left to the horrors of an Eastern bazaar, the fate of so many high-born Russian girls whom the world failed to succour in their extremity.

My next move was to Teheran, to stay with Sir Percy Cox, at his charming summer residence in a fairy garden and on a trout stream at Gulahek, with the great snow peak of Devanand standing out behind. It was the summer suburb of all that intriguing diplomatic corps, and the Staraselskis too and his Cossack officers, all of whom I met at various houses. I liked the old Cossack chief, and wondered what was to become of him and how well his purse was lined. The Anglo-Persian agreement had set them all by the ears and the whole place was buzzing.

I had a pleasant stay with Sir Percy, without knowing exactly what he wanted me to do, but as I told him I was going to bring mounted troops to Kasvin in case he had to be rescued, no doubt he got what he wanted without suggesting it! I had an interview with Vosuk-ul-Doulah and thought him an outstanding personality, but apparently too deep in the Persian mire of lucre. Persia struck me as a pretty hard proposition. A good, happy, simple peasantry tyrannized over by a pleasant, rapacious, unscrupulous set of barons and landowners whose guts, however, were of the poorest, with a few Turkish lords and tribes who could terrorize the rest.

As for the fat Shah, he was away in Europe and was the worthless last of the four great Tartar dynasties

that had so long dominated Asia from the Bosphorus to the Pacific; the first to go the Mogul at Delhi,¹ then all in a bunch the Manchu Emperor at Peking, the Sultan at Constantinople, and now, within the last year or so, the Turkish dynasty of the Kajjars of Persia and, once again, "none so poor to do them reverence."

I then went back to Kasvin on my way to the Caspian, first however ordering the 11th Bengal Cavalry and the Chestnut troop to come up to Kasvin, so that if there was to be any cossacking in that whirl of bitter intrigue, we should cossack first and Cox should not be at the mercy of the Georgian.

From Kasvin to the Caspian is 130 remarkable miles. For 50 miles or so you drive through the barren hills that I know so well on the Afghan border, past Manzil, where the wind never ceases to blow by day and only night is tolerable, and then, lo! round the corner you get to the slopes on which the clouds from the Caspian impinge. All is glory and like the road from Blair Atholl to Killiecrankie, oaks, hazel, ash, ferns, dripping wells and flowers, as the road winds for many miles and descends many thousand feet to the Caspian, and comes to the plain where you enter jungles like Burma and come to the town of Resht. Here once again it was the Bank Manager who kept open house for British officers. What struck me at Resht was the faint hint of China; gateways and temples had the Tartar curl in the eaves and arches, of which you catch a faint suggestion also in the little temples in the Simla Hills.

From Resht to Enzeli was a short enough run through dwarf acacia scrub, where they told me in the winter you can't walk for the woodcock that there abound. And so to the Russian village at Enzeli, where they fish for sturgeon and produce glorious fresh caviare, that so annoyed our men when they got a ration of it

¹ Nominally existent till 1857.

and complained of "that black jam, what the quarter-jack had said was fish."

All the way down, the great Caspian Sea lay before us 650 miles long and 220 wide, and I for one had never realized the size and might of this inland salt sea on which ocean steamers of 3,000 to 4,000 tons were plying, and which lay 80 feet below the level of open oceans. It was a new world, and I was vexed to think that we had just withdrawn the white ensign that had followed the Dunster Force, and given our vessels into the feeble hands of Deniken, only to sell it to the Bolshies. Lieut.-Colonel Lyon, who came out to meet me, commanded the garrison, which consisted of his battalion, the Deolis, a couple of mountain guns and a four-inch gun in a redoubt guarding the entrance to the harbour, which the mountain gunners also manned after their versatile way. All was quiet enough, but we were a bluffing force, only enough to prevent Jangalis seizing the port and our petrol supply, and maintain some order, and not enough to tackle the Bolshevik if he put in an appearance. To find the Deoli Regiment ¹ in garrison at Enzeli was about the limit in our far-flung battle line. All was well with Colonel Lyon and only one thing troubled him. That was the mixed bathing. Beautiful sandy shore lay near his camp in which you wade miles without wetting more than your knees, for the Caspian is not tidal. On this shore the troops bathed happily. But also the comely lasses of the Russian village did the same "mid nodings on," and mingled with the soldiery. Now this, while a source of interest to Atkins, was a horror and offence to the Indian soldiery, or so it was said. In any case it was not seemly, and so the good Colonel Lyon put up notices in three languages: "Reserved for Russians," "Reserved for Soldiers,"

¹ An irregular local corps in Central India brought into the line by Lord Kitchener as the 43rd Regiment.

and the like. But then to his annoyance one day he had ridden on the sand to find his orders disregarded and soldiery, white and brown, and Russian lasses still a-bathing and a-sun-bathing together. He rode in to shoo the lasses away, and, lo! they laughed heartily, and rolled over and over before him in the wet sand and little flapping waves. But all I could say to comfort him was "*A la guerre comme à la guerre*," and that the world would put itself right presently.

So he took heart of grace and gave me a very good lunch of fresh Caspian salmon, and his officers told me of adventures with the woodcock the winter before, which I really believed, and thought that Enzeli might want inspecting next winter if snow permitted.

CENTRAL KURDISTAN

But Mesopotamia looked none too peaceful, for telegrams had come in from my good C.G.S. to say that the Northern Kurds had risen and had attacked Zakkho, from which, as I had ordered, the garrison had been withdrawn, and that the political officer and levies had had to get away from Amadia. General Cassels now commanded at Mosul *vice* Fraser on leave. So I ordered a mixed force to be got ready to give them a hammering and sped away back to Bagdad lest worse befall, for I think I knew the volcano I was sitting on. Especially was I anxious that the Euphrates tribes should not rise. The middle Euphrates had seen little of the War and of our strength, and the coffee-shop propaganda was especially rife there. But the pleasant uplands of Persia were hard to leave for the heat of the plains. On my way down I went to look at progress on a railway line that I had decided to push out from the Bagdad Persian Border line towards Tuz Qurmatli and Kifri, so as to get troops and supplies up nearer the Kurdish Hills, and further it was obvious that we were tapping

a really fertile area which would be far more valuable later to the Iraq Government than the barren line to Mosul.

The operations necessary in Northern Kurdistan proved to be extended. A brigade under Brigadier-General Nightingale was severely attacked while waiting to advance on Amadia at Sowaira, 25 miles from that post. Another Brigade under Brigadier-General Woolridge was assembled at Zakkho and the two under Major-General Cassels were to tramp out the rebellious districts and also, as we were about it, to penetrate into the hills, those valleys where the Goyans had murdered the political officer just before my arrival.

The attack on Sowaira was a desperate one, much after those of the older days on the Indian Frontier before the tribesmen had abandoned their swords for rifles. A piquet was captured which left the camp exposed and fanatics were killed within the perimeter.

Advancing into the inner hills a force detached from Nightingale's column while reconnoitring the road over the Ser Amadia was surprised and suffered severely. It was a Frontier Force unit too, who should have been the last to be caught napping, but caught napping it was and paid severely for it. There was a striking incident, in which a number of Sikh prisoners were brought before the Kurdish Agha in command. He demanded from a young Moslem corporal, who was also a prisoner, what manner of men these were, as they appeared to be unbelievers and worthy of death. The young Moslem swore by the Koran that they were just as good Moslems as he was, and if the Agha did not believe him, let him strip them and see. The Agha did not call the bluff and the Sikhs' lives were saved.¹ A day or so later Cassels

¹ I gave the boy a distinguished conduct medal, which he richly deserved.

surprised the Kurds in their turn and recovered the prisoners. Then followed several days of hard marching and sharp hill fighting. As the operations were about to cease the Goyans and Gulis attacked the rearguards and I ordered Cassels to turn about and make a decent job of Karroar, their principal village, as it was no use having to do it all again a bit later. This he did admirably, and the whole business was now handsomely over and with such effect that throughout all Sir Aylmer Haldane's troubles of the next year, the Kurds let him severely alone. These jobs are always best done thoroughly. The Kurdish fighting was not yet finished, however, for I had to make one more tour into a new set of valleys. The political officer, none other than Rajah Bill¹ of Bannu days, had recently come out to the Mosul charge. Riding round the frontier districts with some levies, he was treacherously attacked and murdered with some of his men, a very great loss to the public service. It was necessary to recover his body and exact reparation, and again a small column from Mosul had to enter the hills about the Greater Zab River between the two districts which had recently been tackled. I went up to Mosul again to see this force enter the hills, and they were able to put things fairly right with little fighting.

It had indeed been a disturbed summer, with five distinct sets of operations in progress, and a matter of great credit to the troops who should have enjoyed complete rest after the World War.

By October things seemed more settled and I hoped for a better cold season.

EUPHRATES TROUBLES

It was not till November that my wife arrived and was tucked away delighted on to the S.1, dreary however without the faithful Yukon, now back in his

¹ Mr. H. S. Bil, I.C.S.

beloved Pacific provinces. I had meant to go on to the Hamar Lake and show her the Lower Euphrates, but just as we were starting came a telegram of some trouble far up the Euphrates. It looked as if the expected explosion might be coming, and I determined that I must get back to G.H.Q., so we sped up the river and I sent for the political officers at the various places *en route* to hear if any repercussions of the trouble seemed likely. Happily we had too close a grip on the Beni Lam for anything to affect them while our steamers and troops were *en evidence*, and I got back to Bagdad to find that matters were serious but could apparently be localized. My special *bête noire*, in the shape of detachments, the garrison of Deir-es-Zor far up the Euphrates, was now in trouble. Some of our Damascus friends, who should have been under the proper control of Allenby's officers, had rushed the place, and taken all my detachment prisoners, for the officer in charge had very rightly thought it was no good putting up a hopeless fight against our own Allies. But all Europeans and levies were reported to be in *durance vile*. Further, my outpost at Abu Kemal was being attacked by the invader, reinforced by local tribes who had risen.

It was pretty essential to put a stop to what was in progress, and I at once wired to Lord Allenby's headquarters to keep their friends in order and sent my planes to see what could be done and also take word to the filibuster, one Ramazan Shallash, that unless my people were at once released and treated suitably, I should bomb him all day and every day, which did produce some result. It was too far off to do much with troops, being some 400 miles away, and where in my judgment a small detachment should never have been placed, however urgent the political situation. Sir William Marshall had, however, thought otherwise on the evidence at his disposal. It was absolutely

essential to relieve my levies at Abu Kemal who were now besieged by Master Ramazan, and to this end I despatched Brigadier-General Young commanding one of the Cavalry Brigades with all the armoured motor-cars, machine guns in Ford vans and mounted troops that I could collect with Ford supply convoys. Young was able to relieve Abu Kemal, where the levies had behaved exceedingly well, though sorely tried because the attacking Arabs had been graciously pleased to rape their women-folk in front of them on the parade ground to the glory of God and his Prophet, the which somewhat disturbed Miss Bell's faith in their inherent civilization and culture.

Egyptian Headquarters now arranged for a Commissioner from the Arab Government in Damascus to come and read the Riot Act, with the result that a temporary frontier about Abu Kemal was arranged for. The whole thing was of course absurd, as any disagreement could at any time have been amicably settled. It showed, however, the powder mine on which we were sitting, and of which I kept reminding an unwilling Ministry tied to the tail of the Paris Conference.

The mischief was, however, done. The Arab tribes were amazingly disturbed by the unwarranted setback to our prestige of the Deir-es-Zor business, and it was to have its astounding aftermath in the Arab Rebellion brewing over my successor's head.

CHRISTMAS IN BAGDAD

The few weeks my wife was with me were spent very pleasantly, despite my anxieties on the Euphrates. The English society was developing, the officers of the civil administration had out their families. I had arranged a special hostel for the Army officers and their ladies, of whom several had arrived and others were camped round Bagdad. As getting about was

not always easy, my wife let people know that she would be delighted if they would call in before lunch, when they came in to shop in the bazaars, rather than at more orthodox hours, and we soon made the acquaintance of the garrison, as well as of the Foreign Consuls and the mercantile community. The Chief's house, which had been the residence in which both Marshal Von der Goltz had died while commanding the Turks and General Maude had passed away, was easily adapted for a lady, and the inner court looking on the Tigris made a delightful breakfast spot. Gertrude Bell had now returned to her palm-garden house from her well-earned rest and social life was in fairly active swing. Next door a jolly old rip of an Arab Pasha lived and showed us great civility. It was necessary to think of some accommodation for families and young British soldiers in the hills in the summer, and plans were laid for a camp in Persia for the troops and a hostel for ladies in Kermanshah. Some of my own Staff were anxious to take our Headquarters to the hills also, but this I refused to entertain. I thought things much too jumpy to leave the centre, and the Headquarters of the civil administration of which I too was the final head. The withdrawal of detachments and isolated civil officers had always been my intention, followed by a swift blow at any disturbers. I am sorry to say they persuaded General Haldane, my successor, to leave Bagdad, and he was caught on the hop and isolated so that detachments were cut off and had to be rescued, and civil officers were brutally murdered.

Just before Christmas I received orders to proceed to India and take up the appointment of Quartermaster-General in India, long the height of my ambitions, but at that juncture I wanted to see the trouble through, especially in the belief that my knowledge of the country and familiarity with the political situation,



THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S QUARTERS IN BAGDAD, 1917-1920
Here both Sir Stanley Maude and Marshal von der Goltz died.

as well as my close *entente* with Arnold Wilson, would enable us to weather the storm without assistance. I knew I was to be offered the Q.M.G.-ship, but had expected the usual letter asking if it would be agreeable to me. This did not come, but merely an order to go. I have always gone where ordered, and being a disciplined officer I did not query the order. Had I been asked, I had intended to reply that I would go wherever I was wanted, but if any choice was allowed me, would have preferred to see the Mesopotamian trouble out.

I found afterwards that the War Office in issuing the order were under the impression that I had already been offered the appointment from India, and had accepted, and that they were merely following my wishes. I was given to understand that they would gladly have left me where I was.

It was the end of January before I could get away, after the most kindly and cordial farewell from the military, civil and Arab community. Just before I left, the through railway by the Euphrates was completed and my wife was asked to open it by screwing in the last bolt, a silver one with a silver spanner which was presented to her. With the last piece of the line in place the train from Basra full of notables steamed in amid scenes of enthusiasm. Among the trophies were some of the invitations from the German Bagdad line to witness the inauguration of the piece from Bagdad to Samara, issued a few years previously.

We preferred to do our final voyage journey down the Tigris once more in the old S.1, stopping at Qurna to give a military medal to a very fine young Marsh Arab of the levies who had much distinguished himself in a recent raid. At the Base we attended a Masonic Ball, and then went down to Muhammerah to present to the Sheikh as a reward for his services one of our hospital steamers in which he proposed to take selected parties of his wives a-touring. Alas, poor Sheikh

Khazal ! a very loyal and faithful friend to the British, but a subject of Persia. To what, in many ways, is our eternal disgrace, he was summoned later to Persia by the new regime and never allowed to return. He had no doubt asked for trouble by giving "backchat" and disregarding British advice as to how to behave towards his new masters, but for all that he had been too honestly and consistently our supporter to be allowed ever to come to such an end. It is thus we lose so much of our prestige. Our Foreign Offices are not always loyal to their friends.

CHAPTER XV

ARMY HEADQUARTERS IN INDIA AFTER THE WAR

BOMBAY AND ITS PROBLEMS

TO steam into Bombay on a fine morning is at all times an inspiring thing, but to steam in with the War over, and to take up an appointment that has always been the ambition of the organizing soldier, was more than ever exhilarating. The post of Quarter-master-General in India has always been venerated, while to me the fact that Lord Roberts had held it made it one of the greatest ambitions that a man could have, and compensated me for leaving an actual Commander-in-Chiefship. It was not going to be a bed of roses. Even in the height of peace, an Army must be fed, horsed, clothed, housed, and moved, and the routine at all times calls for long hours and business insight. Now, as Sir Charles Monro had written, there was the whole problem of disentanglement after the Great War to solve, of surplus stores, of changes in principle to be done into peace-time practice. Further, the confusion which the rebellion in the Punjab, added to the entirely unexpected and uncalled-for Afghan invasion that had come on to a demobilizing Army, had complicated everything to do with supply and equipment in a very remarkable and disconcerting manner. A friend was amusing enough to say : "Am I to congratulate you on your new sentence ? Mesopotamia was the 'first division,' but this is four years' hard labour."

Everyone in Bombay was charming, as Indian friends always are, and we stayed with Sir George and Lady Lloyd, and I was especially able to talk over with him and the District Commander the schemes for the development of congested Bombay and the reclamation of Back Bay.

Bombay, as all the world should know, stands on two islands, two islands growing more and more crowded. It came to us as dowry with the wife of Charles II, Catherine of Braganza, and a very wonderful dowry it is.

Now for two small islands to accommodate not only a vastly expanding commercial city, but also to develop a huge mill industry, complicates the problem of space. The meretricious post-war boom of prosperity, which was in reality only the filling up of the vacuum made by four years of restricted import, had emphasized the need for expansion. The energetic and efficient George Lloyd had thrown himself into this need with customary zeal. Among many admirable projects, that for filling in the Back Bay, which had for thirty years and more been on the "tapis," was to the fore. Many engineers had reported on it, and Lloyd brought it forward again. The problem is worth understanding, especially as for the moment the Army alone have reaped the benefit of it.

If you hold your left hand in front of you, palm to the right, and consider it cut by an arm of the sea at the wrist, you get a model of Bombay Harbour and Back Bay. That is to say, the curve between fingers and thumb represents the harbour, the thumb the Colaba Isthmus or Point, and the Back Bay lies to the right of the thumb, only rather more curved at the base of the thumb to form Malabar Hill. The Back Bay is but part of the open sea. On the right of the upper joint of the thumb is a mass of rock, uncovered at low tide, on which were rifle ranges.

The British troops are quartered at Colaba Point in a very restricted space hard by the thumb-nail, and an Indian battalion faces the Back Bay, as did also the residences of the military staff of Bombay, all sites of extreme value. The Back Bay reclamation scheme involved building a retaining wall, from near the thumb-nail, reclaiming a considerable piece of the foreshore of the Bay, especially at the bend where Malabar Hill juts out into the sea, at the base of the thumb.

I came in in this way. The scheme in brief would give the Army 200 solid acres of new ground out at Colaba, on which we could build decent officers' flats instead of the disgraceful old Colaba bungalows; the men are well-barracked already. There would be a fine parade ground; the Indian Infantry would be brought, half to Colaba in new lines and half put up in Deolali, where they could do their training, and the General and all his Staff should have new modern quarters. In return we were to relinquish all the old military sites that were so valuable in the "Fort" area, and marine lines. This would, it was calculated, not only pay all our share, but give the Army a handsome profit. It so obviously fulfilled the great needs of the troops, and it also postulated a fine motor promenade round the Point, that I eagerly enough responded and promised to back it. Our Sir George Buchanan, the expert Port Engineer from Basra, who was employed on the work, has been subjected to an entirely Oriental course of misrepresentation, and the whole Back Bay work is in abeyance. Lloyd, who has also been blamed, is entirely unrepentant, declaring very truly that some day the whole of Bombay will rise up and call him blessed, at shaking them out of their accommodation impasse.

For the moment the only people who score are the Army, for enough of the work has been carried through

B.S.M.W.

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to reclaim all their needs, and they have the much-needed new houses, exercise ground and compact lines at Colaba. The rest is a sorry story.

ARMY HEADQUARTERS AT DELHI

My excellent personal assistant, Captain Fox, of the unattached list,¹ was waiting for me in Bombay with a saloon carriage. My wife left me to go to the Nilgherries to see her mother, and I travelled happily enough to Delhi, to find a very warm welcome from Sir Charles Monro and many old friends. Sir Claude Jacob, as C.G.S., had succeeded the good Kirkpatrick, who had helped us so in Mesopotamia, my old friend "Huddy" General Sir Havelock Hudson, was Adjutant-General, and the Chief was the Chief, a delight to serve; while, coming, as I had done, from Gallipoli, I had a lively recollection of how he had saved us by his strength of character from the folly of our Cabinet in plumping at once for evacuation.² The soldier of all races and his ways and his humours are such a joy to me, that to serve with Sir Charles, whose knowledge of and affection for the British Regular Army and the British soldier was unique, was a special delight.

Sir Claude I had only just met before, but his kindness and helpfulness soon made one feel that one had come to a very happy Headquarters.

When I turned to my own Department, the outlook was not so rosy from my point of view, as I found all the directors, viz. the Heads of Services, had finished their tenures, had been working all day and all night for years, and were done to a turn, and only too anxious for a rest, and little inclined to face what now had to be faced, the turning of the new organizations into

¹ Now Lieut.-Colonel Fox, M.B.E.

² A decision very foolishly and ignorantly criticized by Douglas Jerrold's *The War on Land*, Benn's 6d. series.

the ways and regulations of peace. To fight with the Finance Department for every potato the soldier put into his mouth, and every boot that he put on to his foot, was beyond their idea of their deserts. The tragedy that had worn them stale was to have to run a war without the freedom from meticulous interference from which they had suffered through much of their work. To run a war on a peace routine is the queen of nightmares. And the trouble was that there were only tired men wanting leave and a rest to take their places, while the salaries offered by India were not enough to induce competent men of the Departmental Services in Great Britain to come and take their places. The Departmental Directorship at the War Office, or at Army Headquarters in India, is the one plum that officers of the Departmental Services have to look to. It is the reward of long years of service and hard work, and a reward only to be enjoyed if you are still as young and hard-working as ever you were. The scale of remuneration for such officers should not be the same as for officers of the combatant branches of the same actual rank who have fifty futures still ahead. The departmental man is finishing his career.

The ancient Mogul system of supplying an Army had prevailed in India up to 1917; and the Indian portion of the Army had fed itself, clothed itself, horsed itself, small-stored itself, on a contract basis. As we had pointed out in Lord Kitchener's time, such a system had only the merit of cheapness, and in no way provided for war, and in modern times had broken down on every possible occasion, to the shame and chagrin of the military commanders and heavy cost to the Government of the day. We knew, too, that the Indian soldier came to us too ill-nurtured to stand a Central Asian campaign. But no one had listened.

During the World War all these crimes came home

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to roost in the general failures of the Indian Forces and the contumely heaped on the Indian Administration. When Sir Charles Monro had come to India, bringing some knowledge of the world at war into the secluded Indian atmosphere, he set things moving handsomely, and, among many things, the Government of India decided that it must feed its recruit soldiers in India from the day they were caught, if they were to be fit to face prolonged war. That is to say, they set up a proper Supply Service; they also found that they must clothe, equip, and barrack their Army, and that they must also become, as in other countries, the remounting authority. They also asserted that they intended to continue to do so when peace had come again.

It is not, therefore, hard to imagine that as all these changes came within the Quartermaster-General's province there was certain to be fun ahead for the first peace-time Q.M.G.

THE ROMANCE OF DELHI

The Delhi of the past is, of course, always glorious, but to me it is the Delhi of the Mutiny that appeals first and last. Nor is it of necessity the Delhi of the Ridge, the Delhi of the avengers, but the Delhi of the coming of the Mutiny that fascinates me, the Delhi that Flora Annie Steele alone tells of in *On the Face of the Waters*. Every morning I would ride out to the Kashmir Gates, through the Kudsia Bagh, and then down under the river wall, and the water bastion, and look up on those old haunted bungalows, where massacre had come to the unsuspecting inhabitants that Monday morning in May in the year of our Lord 1857. And the romance of that ride along the bastioned wall and up through the ditch to the *Zer Jaroka* of the Imperial Palace never palled. Then, too, I would ride in by the Kashmir Gate to the site of the

arsenal and marvel over the blowing up of the magazine, that story which is also so misunderstood. As a Quartermaster-General the story has always appealed to me, and I have lately tried to put the misconception right in Blackwood, for all the histories are inadequate.

I have always marvelled that no one has wondered how the mutineers, who swelled to 40,000, and stoutly pounded the avengers on the ridge with artillery fire and musketry for the best part of four months, got their ammunition. We doubtless give ill-considered credit to the ravens. For four solid months did the mutineers pour mysterious shot and shell from countless cannon they found in the arsenal, yet the historians tell us, truly enough, of that gallant band of ordnance officers and warrant officers who defended their arsenal and blew up their magazine. But the mutineers could only have marched in from their various cantonments with their pouch ammunition. And the magazine was blown up ! Whence, oh public, military and civil, did their ammunition come from ? The answer to the mystery which so few have spotted is this. The magazine in the arsenal was only the expense magazine of fifty barrels of powder from which practice ammunition was made up. A few years before the Mutiny wise old Sir Charles Napier, the Commander-in-Chief, had been horrified to find that the principal arsenal of Northern India was within the walls of a recently conquered city which contained a special enclave of Mongul malcontents. The Government would not allow him to move it, but did agree to the magazine being placed in the cantonment some three miles above the city. The new magazine, a fortified enclosure, still standing and used to this day as the hunt kennels, contained 3,000 barrels of powder. When Brigadier Graves, commanding in the cantonment, saw the explosion of the expense magazine, he sent two officers off to blow up the main one. The native guard, how-

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ever, fired on them and would not admit them, and this supply fell into the mutineers' hands. For this reason, and for this reason only, was the maintenance of Delhi as a mutineer rallying-point possible. But you won't find this in any historian's account of the siege.¹

At a reception and investiture at Viceregal Lodge at Delhi, Lord Chelmsford invested me with the Insignia of the Knight Commander of the Star of India, as His Majesty had done the year before for the Bath, and friends were kind enough to congratulate one on wearing the two highest of the ordinary orders. To a soldier the Bath, and to a soldier who loves India and the Indian Army, the Star of India, are very high guerdon, and I felt duly humble at being numbered among those who are the Knights.

SIMLA AGAIN

I was very fortunate in obtaining as my quarters an old-fashioned single-storied house, "Knowlswood." It had, by rumour, both a ghost and a familiar snake, but we never saw either. It was built across a spur of deodar forest, with precipitous sides. The house blocked the whole spur, and in front of the drawing-room door was a long avenue of gigantic deodars, which formed picturesque and romantic grounds, with a pleasant grassy knoll at the end. I had bought my two chargers from the British remounts in Bagdad, two 16-hand horses, and brought them to India. Big though they were, they would climb the Simla hills like cats. The first year the Chelmsfords were with us, charming and kindly beyond compare, he, alas, much worn from holding the fort during the War,

¹ I found it in the reports of the Brigadier, and the Director-General of Ordnance. Lord Dalhousie, writing at the outbreak, reminds his friends, too, that the main magazine was outside ! (Lord Dalhousie's letters.)

and during the Rebellion and the Afghan Invasion, to say nothing of the Reforms and their labour.

The next year daughter Joan, of frontier sandheap memory, aged eighteen, joined us, made the horses her own, and drilled her Bluebirds on the deodar avenue. Now Bluebirds is the Indian euphemy for Girl Guides of the junior division whom in England we call Brownies. Brownies is not always an acceptable term for Christian girls in India. It always intrigued me to try and recapture that old feeling of romance, of which I have already written, and to look at Simla from the point of view of the gods and *burra mems* at whom Kipling has so properly poked fun. It was really rather stimulating to get one's self up in cockety hat and jam-tart jewels and go to the *entrée* at the Viceroy's levee while Strickland *Sahib* and the like kept the way for one. One met folk of interest, for the wife of the Governor-General of the Philippines confided to me that her daughter had been cow-sick over the gasoline engine coming up the winding hill road. She also somewhat demurred at the pomp which Lord Reading kept. But I explained that a Viceroy, living among the Courts of Eastern Princes, could not be behind. "Ah," said she, "I understand. A little more dawg."

Daughter Joan found it fun to be on a footing with Viceregal A.D.C.'s, and very good they all were to her, and none so kindly as Their Excellencies.

A great honour came to me in these days in that the Duke of Connaught appointed me District Grand Master of the Punjab, and I sat in the Chair which Lord Kitchener and General Sir O'Moore Creagh had sat in in the old time before.

"Knowlswood" was a good house to entertain one's friends and one's staff in, with a good tennis court, and we kept open house in a simple way. The deodar avenue, lit with lanterns, gave many suitable corners

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of shadows, for what is Simla, or any other place for the matter of that, without dark corners, in which Amaryllis and the lads of the village may disport in the shade.

But an amusing feature of our time was the Indian ladies who came to Simla to break their purdah, and then return after a few months to the plains as bold as brass. And very comely, charming women many of them were, and very like any others. Indeed, one evening I was riding round jacko when I came on an Indian lady, also a-horseback, and a young Indian gentleman in what, for want of a more suitable phrase, I might call a Kipling story attitude. Next day I met her at dinner and she was at great pains to explain how Captain Bhose was so kindly teaching her to ride. *A la guerre comme à la guerre.*

Indeed I found it good to come back to Simla as a brass hat and find some of the old faces still there. Lady Ker, still at historic Chapslee; Buckie at Mahasu; Mrs. George Wilson, now alas passed away, in Holly Lodge; Cavaliere Peliti, the big monkey on Jakkho; Charley Ram, and the like. And while we were there, passed away Colonel Sir Alfred MacKenzie, who had settled down at Mashobra and at last refused to budge, snow or no snow, saying, too, that there were three predatory classes, doctors, priests, and lawyers, and he would have none of them. But we buried him 'neath the Simla pines, with all grief and glory, the Army attending as it should to bury one who had served in the Mutiny, indeed one whose regiment had commenced the carnage at Meerut.

THE ESHER COMMITTEE

But while I have havered of the romance of things, my term as Q.M.G. was really hard business. The first thing I ran into was the Indian Esher Committee. Sir Charles Monro, perhaps lest worse befall, had

agreed to ask for a Committee to try and lay down what was to be the future of the Indian Army. Lord Esher himself had attended the meetings in London, but did not come to India, and the Deputy Chairman, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, till recently the Governor of the Punjab, presided. General Sir Herbert Vaughan-Cox, Lieut.-General Sir Havelock Hudson, and Major-General Sir Webb Gillman were among the principal members, with my old friend, Sir Muhammed Hyat Khan.

Among other points of reference was the organization of the Army at Headquarters. It should have been quite unnecessary to discuss it, beyond to say that, since the field service organization must follow the Imperial organization of Army Headquarters, India must allocate duties and responsibility in the same way. The War Office opened the War with four branches, those of General Staff, of the Adjutant-General, Quartermaster-General, and Master-General of the Ordnance. The Indian Army had six branches, the first three and that of the Director-General of Ordnance and the Director-General of Military Works, and the Director-General of Medical Services—six top-liners, all with "right of access," an impossible system to co-ordinate.

I found the Committee somewhat uncertain as to principles, and a little inclined to retain the D.G. Medical Services as a top-liner still, and was told it was my evidence alone which determined their views. I had but emphasized the principle maintained in Great Britain, both in the Army and in Government, viz. that the technical man must never be a top-liner. The principle of the Army is to have four most experienced senior non-technical officers responsible, who have no departmental axe to grind. Under them the Heads of Services must be grouped according to whatever was the accepted principle of grouping, and

especially must India and the War Office be the same, or the follies of the World War would come again.

The D.G.M.S. must go under the Adjutant-General, the Works should be under the Q.M.G., the fighting Sappers under the C.G.S., the arsenals under the Q.M.G., and the factories that dealt with arms and munitions must be under a non-departmental artillery chief. The Esher Committee's principal recommendation postulated four Commands in India, that should have administrative powers and delegated responsibility, that the three principal Staff officers should control all the Services, and that there should either be a good commercial civilian, who should run the factories and all production, or that the munitions ministry should be continued as a separate ministry, and that under it should be all the production for the Army, viz. the factories, purchase, and the farms.

The result of this was that a System was introduced of four Commands, under a G.O.C. in Chief, but India forgot the essential of that system, viz. the having a Major-General in charge of administration, as at home, with certain powers of his own.

As far as my branch was concerned, the Committee did all that was necessary, confirming the fact that the Q.M.G.'s responsibilities must include all movements and quarterings, supply and transport, ordnance services, that is to say, the holding and distribution of all war stores, and the remounts. They recommended that the Engineer Construction Service, known as Works, should be under the Q.M.G., with a Major-General of fighting Engineers under the C.G.S.

THE COMMAND SYSTEM

It is interesting to understand the Command System of India, of which a good deal has been written, and much forgotten. Up till 1902 the three Indian Armies of Bengal (which included the Punjab), Madras, and

Bombay, were separate, under their own Commander-in-Chief, with a Military Department of Government, and the Commander-in-Chief in India was really only C.-in-C. of the British troops, and except on major questions did not interfere. Each Army had its own line, with its 1st Cavalry, 1st Infantry, etc. Now each Army arranged its own quartering and maintenance, under its own Government. From the point of view of decentralization, it was unrivalled. Had the Presidential Government been destined to remain, and had a better division of the Central and Provincial responsibilities been formed, there was little to criticize other than the inconvenience of the separate numberings.

Early in the nineties the two subordinate Chiefs were abolished, and the military departments of the Governments, and in their place four Commands were formed—Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and the Punjab, commanded by Lieutenant-Generals, while the Army Headquarters at Simla became a real Army Headquarters, with a Central Army Budget. This automatically swept into the hands, not of the Commander-in-Chief, but of the Government of India, most of the financial authority. The four Commands were administrative, with certain definite powers, but with no great decentralization of financial power, for the reason that such, by the nature of things, is not possible. The G.O.C.-in-C. of the Command can see that training is carried out; can see that regiments are equipped according to scale and well fed according to scale, but except in the minor amenities of everyday life there is no room for him to vary routine or scales. Nor can it be so.

When Lord Kitchener came into power, he wanted money for reforms, and he said: "The country is too big for four Commands to be administratively effective. I will make the Divisional Commanders the administrative head; they shall have much authority,

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and I will have only two Commanders who shall not administer but shall inspect, and be practically Inspector-Generals—North and South. I will allow them to make a few lesser appointments, but it's inspection I want, not command." And it was so. The Divisional Command areas, sometimes as large as Germany, held many more troops than a division, and included Cavalry Brigades, Army Troops, Depots, etc. But because Lord Kitchener would not face facts, he spoilt this otherwise admirable organization. He kept his Divisional General signing sanctions all day long instead of carrying out the important function of training his War Division. Had he given each Divisional Command a Brigadier of administration, the routine work, which was very heavy, could have been properly done, and the Commander freed, at any rate in the Divisional areas which contained a War Division, and the A.Q.M.G. would have been free to accompany the War Division on mobilization. As it was, the formation went and left the huge areas full of depots and military institutions with no one to control them. This produced absolute chaos in the World War, for in India whatever is done, the size of a divisional area and the vast amount of troops and military it contains, besides its war formations, must always make it more like a "Command" than anything else.

Now, with the immense amount of work in depots, and raising new corps that the War brought about, Army Headquarters found that it had more separate portmanteaux to manage than it could fairly handle, and the demand was pretty great to revert to the four-command system, which would relieve Headquarters of some of the detail. The Esher Committee endorsed this view, and soon after my arrival in India the Secretary of State sanctioned the proposal. But the General Staff found it extremely difficult to devise

a satisfactory division of India, especially post-war India, into a four-command system and into separate districts. Innumerable have been the tentative maps, and already has the first grouping, brought about as Lord Rawlinson arrived, had to be changed, and, what is more, the Commands have been so framed that there is almost a strong case for eliminating one of them. If anyone studies the map of India he will see that the absence of a broad-gauge line between Karachi and Bombay, and the intervening of the Rajputana deserts, make a satisfactory grouping a very difficult matter. Lord Kitchener's advisers made the cardinal error of massing troops too thickly in the North. They are much better in the more moderate climates of the South and West, and, providing there are enough "covering" troops on the frontier to cover mobilization, troops are better kept dispersed where they could be trained, and massed only on mobilization or for the larger manœuvres.

With the new post-war Commands Army Headquarters were relieved of much detail, but this was not possible in many of the Q.M.G.'s departments because such things as arsenals and remount depots were not located to cater for each Command, but to cater for the Army as a whole, according to facilities of river, rail, and the like, or for climatic reasons. It was only by chance that they happened to be located in any particular district so far as the requirements of that district were concerned. Many of the new G.O.C.'s-in-Chief complained that they did not get enough powers, and that they had to refer to the Q.M.G., but neither they nor Lord Rawlinson understood that in almost every financial case, where the C.-in-C. had powers himself, these powers were delegated, and that *most of the cases referred to the Q.M.G.* were because the Chief himself had no power, but could only *recommend* to the Government of India for

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sanction. Decentralization almost always comes down to matters of financial control. Subordinate's Commanders always wanted power to incur unbudgeted expenditure, or to amend scales, neither of which in peace-time are possible. Even the Army Member and C-in-C. himself had then at any rate very little latitude, and the Finance Member was the arbiter. Now, I believe Sir William Birdwood has been given some assistance in this matter, and is not tied hand and foot.

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN 1920

The military situation in India in 1920, resulting from the Afghan invasion in the summer of 1919, was by no means a pleasant one. The invasion had been beaten back into the hills, but at a great strain to a demobilized army. It had left large numbers of troops, mostly unwilling troops, on the frontier, and the whole of the policy so carefully devised by Lord Curzon had, whether it was sound or not, been absolutely torn up by the inroad. We were in the middle of a severe campaign in Waziristan, quite the severest we had yet had, against a people into whose hands thousands of the derelict arms of the World War had come. Further, the troops involved were of necessity far below the usual par of the Punjab Army. It has very properly been decided that in future we would meet the Afghan above the plains, whose summer could be so disastrous, and that we would establish once and for all a strong force above the Khaiber at Landi Kotal on an upland hill-girt plain a mile or so from the actual Afghan frontier at Landi Khana. Further, we would build a railway there and extend the line now at Jamrud. A great discussion was in progress as to the scale of the railway. As Q.M.G. I pressed for a continuous broad gauge, as the only military solution that would meet the problem, and

also one, if possible, without a rack. The General Staff, from a strategical point of view, were as keen on this as I was from a tonnage aspect. And the Government of India, I am glad to say, agreed.

With these conditions to be faced, we had the reorganization problems to get on with, which had been drawn up by General Hudson and the C.G.S., and approved by Sir Charles Monro and Government. Among these, the following were of most general interest :

- (a) The conversion of the Indian Cavalry to non-Silladar, and the reduction of half the regiments.
- (b) The entire regrouping of the Indian Infantry into several-battalion regiments, and the regrouping also of their enlistment races and castes, so that the maintenance in the field and replacement of casualties should be on a business footing. The importance of this matter had never before been realized.
- (c) The completion of the four-command system.

In addition to the Q.M.G.'s share of implementing the above, there was the most complicated matter of war surpluses and the getting out the necessary despatches which would put before the Secretary of State the new organization of the Departments and Services necessitated by the abandonment of the old Mogul system. This, of course, gave the Finance Department opportunity to fight every detail tooth and nail, which did not make the work simpler and delayed it terribly.

WAZIRISTAN AFTER THE AFGHAN WAR

During all these phases of reconstruction and the struggles of the Government after the War to come to some financial equilibrium, we had on our hands the

disturbed state of the Waziristan portion of the border. After the active campaign in progress in 1920 and 1921 to knock the Waziris out as a hostile force in being, the arrangements for the future of the country went on apace. The General Staff took a hand in persuading the Foreign Department that peace could only come by dominating the Mahsuds from a cantonment up in the hills, in which the troops could spend the summer in peace and health. A circular motor road was driven from the Tochi via Ruzmuk round to Jhandola near Tank. This skirted the whole of the country of the turbulent Mahsud Waziris. A large cantonment with substantial-hutted barracks was erected at Ruzmuk and a heavy howitzer lugged up so that if any man fired into the camp the nearest chief's house and tower should be fired at with the shell, for the glory of "God and His prophet." While this policy was in progress of development I went up to see the road works, motoring from Kohat to within a march of Ruzmuk, which was a very great change from earlier times, and then rode through to Ruzmuk itself and found it a fine open site some 6,000 feet above sea level and well suited for a permanent camp and one in which garrison life could be made healthy and reasonably attractive. It stood in the extreme limit of the Darwesh Khel country, with the haunts of our old-time enemies Makin and Kaniguram within striking distance and actually within howitzer range. No wonder that the Mahsud felt that his *purdah* was irretrievably lifted.

THE OUTBREAK IN MESOPOTAMIA

Lieut.-General Sir Aylmer Haldane, my successor in Mesopotamia, on his way to take over his appointment, visited Delhi, and I was able to tell him a good deal of his Command. It was a very difficult problem to get the hang of, and, as I had feared, he found him-

self in the throes of a big rebellion of the coming of which I had warned the Government at home.

I have already explained how he had given way to the views of his Staff for a summer in the hills away from Bagdad. When his trouble came he was cut off and the fat was in the fire. To get it out we then had to send back close on two divisions of our either tired or young troops from India, at a huge expense. This rising, which I notice some writers have attributed to the over-stimulation of Arab aspiration far in excess of the capacity of their character, that T. E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell and others had aroused, is a striking commentary on the repeated urgings from Mr. Winston Churchill to reduce my garrison, and my demur—urgings natural enough, till my warnings were received—and the justice of my point of view.

The supply of this force, as well as that of the original garrison, was done from India, and just as my Departments had begun to close down their war purchases and extra establishments, we found ourselves heavily engaged once more in sending stores and forces to Iraq.

THE COMING OF LORD RAWLINSON

Sir Charles went off in a halo of success, having got his military budget passed with enthusiasm at the last meeting of the Unreformed Assembly. But Lord Rawlinson's appointment coincided with an ominous drop, a persistent and continued drop of the rupee. Home charges, which are a very serious item in the military budget, were immensely increased as the rupee began to fall down from its high and post-war boom state of over 2s. 6d.

Thus Lord Rawlinson had to face an immense demand for economy, presented to him with almost venom by the Finance Member. The General Staff had undoubtedly planned a rather larger house than

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could be financed, however serious the frontier position might be. I soon began to realize that I had made a tactical error. Soon after I had arrived the C.G.S. sent me the post-war Q.M.G.'s estimate for Q. services for the post-war Army, and asked me to try and cut it down. I knew very well that India was shouting for money for civil requirements of all kinds, and thought I saw my way to get what was wanted with less. So I reduced the demands by a crore and half. Now had I been the rogue I became after four years at Simla, I should have only produced a crore, which would have been just as well received, and kept half a crore up my sleeve.

A little later I was again called upon to yield milk, and had little enough left, without really impairing minimum efficiency, and was treated as a liar and a thief for my pains.

There was an astounding illustration of the new Finance attitude almost immediately on Lord Rawlinson's arrival, when he threw at me, with some asperity, a memorandum from the Finance Member calling his attention to the heavy losses to the State caused by careless military administration, with a long list of the said losses. It certainly seemed an appalling list to throw at the head of a new C.-in-C. before he had sat a week in his chair, and I took them away to inquire, and then found to my delight, and some annoyance, that they were chiefly a list of war losses. Air Force planes had crashed and Government sanction was necessary for them to write off, after the Pekinese system of Simla. A ship had foundered in the Persian Gulf, huge nominal losses had to be written off in the wood sent as fuel to Mesopotamia owing to drying after some weeks at sea. Then there were the write-offs for stores raided on the North Persia Cordon, lorries and cars left derelict in those wild parts, etc., all, by the way, debitable to the Imperial Government,

most of them referring to transactions during the War, and nothing whatever to do with the Chief or his present Q.M.G., and in no case referring to any maladministration. At the same time, this quite uncalled-for attack did, I think, upset the Chief's nerve.

Happily he was able to accept all Sir Charles Monro's new schemes, and we were able to proceed steadily with them. The Command system was somewhat spoilt for want of money, and I had to go short on the administrative services to carry out supervision of the work in the districts. But that was to be our story right through—an edifice a little too big for our resources—a Mantalini moral.

THE REFORMS

With Lord Rawlinson's arrival, too, came more or less the inauguration of the Political Reforms, and the Duke of Connaught's arrival to do the needful ceremonies, and very gorgeous they were. But how to make the changes in a Continent of 320 million people of over 200 different languages and races, intensely hostile religions, with two-fifths of the country in the hands of over 700 ruling Chiefs, whose allegiance could never be to a Parliament at Delhi, but to the Crown direct through the Governor-General himself, was another matter. We soldiers saw, too, the intense dislike of the fighting races for the *Babu-Shabu* log, the "clerkly-werkly folk," chiefly lawyers, to whom political position would come. The country gentry, the men who mattered as men of courage and character and some idea of responsibility of the life, could not come to the fore here, they had not the learning.¹ It was the business and legal classes, whose hands had

¹ And that is the real difference between East and West, the existence of classes void of the character of which physical courage is the real basis.

never kept their heads, who would come to the new talking shop—men who had, it is true, often held the clerkly offices in ancient days, but never the rule. So we had lots of it, especially from our Indian officers, who came to present their swords to the Duke in the old Mogul Palace at Delhi, and who squirmed at the creatures they saw around, who were to form the legislature. Now I had long known many of those “creatures,” and very good folk I had found them, but, with exceptions, hardly the stuff to lead 320 millions. We behind the scenes in India know that so many of the clerkly classes in the Indian Civil and the Indian Police cannot say boh to the goose of a disorderly crowd, when such things need tackling. Small wonder, too, for never in a thousand years have they ever said boh to any goose! and the trick takes long of learning, so mysterious a matter is “guts” and physical courage.

Indeed, it is this matter of “guts” that is mixed up in the whole problem. How even with “guts” can the Indian official resist the inherent nepotism and family interests which surround him? Backed up by the British official alongside, yes! Alone, it is almost impossible! Most of us would like to see as many Indians to the fore as decent rule admits of, but how many is the vexed question. Somewhere lies a breaking strain. Probably we took the wrong road two or three generations ago, where we started to make India Western and efficient, and deserted the ways of Elphinstone and Malcolm.

THE INDIANIZATION OF THE ARMY

When it comes to the question of the Army the same problem is involved, in a different way. For many years some of us have deplored the failure to bring any Indians forward as soldiers. The Army was the only career in which there was no rise above subor-

dinate positions. The Indian Civil Service, the Medical Service, the Public Works, the Forests, had all taken a due proportion of Indians. The Army had never done so. When His Majesty came to India I was one of a younger party at Army Headquarters who had always urged a beginning. Older heads had said no, and Lord Roberts had advised against it, and I think that it was a thousand pities. We have thus lost the experience of the World War as to their powers of leadership. Now we are doing it amid the chatter of the *babu shabu* of political mind who want the whole box of Indian toys to play with.

We are now taking very nice young fellows, and after going to Sandhurst they were posted to ordinary Corps, where they were very happy. Lord Rawlinson, because he thought their presence in regiments was hindering the coming of young Britons, decided to group all the Indians in certain Corps, to their great chagrin. They wanted to serve among the British, and not with themselves. There is a humorous story knocking about that one of them had said to a British friend that he did not think he could afford the new "Indianized" corps. "Why?" asked his friend. "Oh, the annual confidential reports will be so expensive."

No doubt it is a yarn, but it so exactly expresses the difference that at present an Indian feels when dealing with his own people to dealing with the entirely neutral and honest British.

There is, however, no reason why, if politics are kept out of it, the experiment should not work well, so long as we have a clear idea of how many Indians a regiment can absorb and still be fit to fight a stiff foe. The British Army cannot be used to bolster up too rotten troops. And rotten they will be if the safety line of Indianization be crossed. Where that line is, is a matter for experiment. I put it myself at

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30 per cent. At 50 per cent. your metal will be "tired."

Then most Indians suffer from lethargy comparatively early in life. If an Indian is fit to be a Major and Lieut.-Colonel by the well-known tests of the Army, he will do very well, but no one but the Army must say what those tests are. I see no reason why in time we should not have a few first-rate Indian Colonels, and perhaps even a General or so. You won't get many, but whenever I think it is impossible, then I remember the first gentleman in India, Maharajah Sir Pertab Singh. Who would not follow or serve under a Pertab!

But the real problem is recruitment. India has not the educational system to throw up soldiers or modern officials. The Army scheme of educating the sons of our present Indian officers in the King George's Schools offers by far the best prospects.

THE SILLADAR CAVALRY

The abolition of the Silladar Cavalry system, which had so long served the needs of the Indian Army, was at one time a highly controversial subject, but the War had practically taken the zip out of it. Nevertheless it is worth understanding. Up till the days of the Mutiny there was a Regular Cavalry in each of the three Presidency Armies organized as any other cavalry, while Irregular Cavalry was raised in larger numbers as our rule extended, to police the newly acquired tracts, and also to generally protect the supply system of the Army in war.

In the Mutiny the Regular Light Cavalry in Bengal mutinied almost to a man, while the Irregular Cavalryman, who had always rather laughed at the Regulars who were equipped and dressed as British Light Dragoons and Lancers, only partially did so. Then, the Irregular system prevailed for the first few years

after the Mutiny for all Corps, and the cavalry, except that in Madras, was re-raised on the Irregular system. Under this system the State only supplied firearms, and everything else was nominally provided by the trooper, but in reality by the regiment, from sums deducted from the trooper's pay, which was supposed to be sufficient for all purposes of horsing and equipment.

For many years a magnificent light horse was thus created, but with the increasing efficiency of the enemies whom the Indian Army was being prepared to meet, the Irregular system was found to be quite insufficient, and gradually the Indian Cavalry became, so far as training and rôle, entirely regular, with a largely enhanced number of British officers. But the old Mogul system of supply remained. The Corps provided everything, except firearms and certain items of mobilization equipment. The C.O. of a Silladar Cavalry Regiment needed to be a first-class business man, which he often was not. The increasing price of everything in India, especially horses, soon made the regiments short of cash. Increments of pay lagged behind rises in price, with the result that the regiments for many years before the World War had been inadequately equipped and clothed and poorly horsed. Equipment and horses had to serve too long, and the regiments were not efficient for their purpose. The regiments that mobilized for the World War had a peace establishment of horse far in excess of their war establishment, yet had to receive large drafts of horses before they could take the field. Troops coming into the field demanded large replacements of equipment, which should, of course, have been in first-class order.

From Lord Kitchener's time it was always intended that on general mobilization the Silladar system should be abrogated, and the units return to it on demobili-

zation, after being put into an efficient condition in horses and equipment by the State.

When the World War ended, however, the mass of argument was so overwhelming in favour of not returning to the old system, that there was practically no one in favour of it. Further, since the regiments were now on a regular system, the peace-time difficulty of initial cost, that had always operated against a change, no longer existed.

To help some of the regiments in their remounting, grants of land had been made on the canal colonies as horse farms. These had been delightful as side pursuits, but had not altogether been used as designed. Money made in farming had helped to buy Australian troopers, and the land had not always produced much in the way of horses. In any case, it was necessary to take these over as well as land given to the regiments to grow fodder. The Farms Department took over the grass farms, and the bulk of the horse farms finally reverted to the Civil Government. Since then the Indian Cavalry is now a "Regular" service in the Indian interpretation of the word, viz. as compared with "Silladar." And the units are certainly more efficient as the implements of modern war.

MOVEMENT AND QUARTERING

This essential branch of the Q.M.G.'s work had to be re-organized to meet the new conditions, especially butting of the Indian units and efficient railway movements, and to help me both Brigadier-Generals John Charteris and Percy Hambro came in succession.

CHAPTER XVI

QUARTERMASTERING THE ARMY, INDIA

THE QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT IN INDIA

THIS chapter is a highly technical one, interesting to those who would follow the controversies and principles of the administration of Armies, and especially that of the Army in India, and get some idea of what the work of a Quartermaster-General means.

In India that work is especially heavy because the facilities for supply in the big firms and contractors of a civilized community do not exist. For instance, there is practically no fodder. No one grows it as a business, and decent hay is only obtainable by the Army growing its own. In the same way there is no dairy trade that produces butter and milk fit for Europeans on any scale at all. The Army has had to produce its own milk and butter lest enteric ensue, not only among the soldiers but among the European women and children. So the Q.M.G. had a big Farms Department to control, a department which incidentally bears a considerable part in providing against a fodder famine in India by keeping large reserves of hay stacked cheaply in fat years, and held against a war and famine reserve.

To officers of the Army in Great Britain who have Q. experience and Q. proclivities, as well as those of the other branches of the Staff, I should like to present, and I present it all the more to Commanders-in-Chief

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and Finance Members, how Q. work in India is more than double that of anywhere else. It is double for this reason, and the same applies to the work of the Supply and Ordnance Services, viz. that there are three different kinds of people to be fed, clothed and equipped, and all have different scales and kinds of food and clothing and also of accommodation, and often of transport. These three classes are the European soldier, the Indian soldier and the Indian non-combatant, or follower. Every detail and every reference on all these subjects is trebled, and not only this, the Indian soldier himself is half a dozen quite different soldiers, viz. Sikh, Moslem, Gurkha, etc., so that my second category has several sub-categories, and where the Q.M.G. has to deal with one scale of ration and one kind of dress in Great Britain, he deals with a dozen in India.

And when, as I have already said so often, the Government of India decided to end the ancient Mogul system of regimental purchase and to hand it over to the Q.M.G., they prepared such an inferno of regulations and scales as they never dreamt of. Yet when they had done this, they affected to be surprised that it took more establishment to manage their affairs than it did before, and I had some very unpleasant tussles to get this point into the heads of various people. They all wanted "Duck and green peas for tuppence," and none more so than Lord Rawlinson, who wanted his Army properly fed on modern lines but disliked facing the expenditure.

THE MILITARY WORKS SERVICE

The story of the Military Works Service in India is an interesting one and one of controversy. The arrangements whereby the Director-General of Military Works was a top-liner not subject to the direction of one of the Principal Staff Officers was a blot on proper

co-ordination and a departure from the recognized British system, but it had long endured. When Sir Douglas Haig was C.G.S. he had it ordained that the D.G.M.W. was also ex-officio Inspector of Engineers, and in that capacity was to report not direct to the Chief but to the C.G.S., like the Inspectors of Cavalry and Artillery. The Esher Committee recommended that the inspection and training of Engineer units and Pioneers should be under the charge of an Inspector of Engineers, who should in accordance with the post-war nomenclature be termed Major-General R.E., while the Director General of Military Works in his remaining "Works" side would be a Director under the Q.M.G.

Now the Military Works Branch, the engineer officers and their assistants, who maintained all the barracks, frontier roads and did all "Works," had come in for very great and bitter criticism from the Army and the Finance Department during the War. I thought that criticism almost entirely undeserved. The officers of this branch, even in peace time, are very hardly worked, and suffered from a super-Chinese system of audit which tended to deprive them of all zeal and energy. During the War, cadres were much depleted to furnish officers for the field, dishonest Indian subordinates had far more entrusted to them than they were fit for, and the higher posts were largely filled by officers returned broken down from Mesopotamia. But Works on the Frontier, and in 1917 the construction of barracks and camps for the enormously enhanced number of Indian troops that were being raised for Imperial purposes, threw immense labour on their hands. The work was done, though no doubt money, as was impossible to avoid, was wasted.

Further, military works in India are almost a technical civil side, and men who are first-class at that cannot usually be competent modern soldiers.

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Because they were not, I found that after the War innumerable admirable R.E. lieut.-colonels, capable of running very big construction, were being refused promotion to colonel. I recommended that these officers, who incidentally take on as a rule "continual service" in India, should be treated as joining a department and get their promotion to colonel on the same lines as colonels of the Ordnance Corps, etc. A fresh trouble, magnified to a scandal, which it was *not*, over roads in Waziristan, made the C.G.S. recommend that the recommendation of the Esher Committee be carried out forthwith and the Works be placed under the Q.M.G. as a Directorate. This was sanctioned by the Secretary of State. It had every advantage, and was what the War Office had just recently done.

It also resulted in preventing a good deal of waste of money, as it enabled all *new* expenditure in the districts to be controlled by the Q. Staff instead of by the Engineer officers, who would often get the General to approve expenditure on something new, when "Q" knew that the limited funds available were more wanted elsewhere.

Then came the accession of Lord Rawlinson, who for some unexplained reason wished to break away from the new symmetry and practice and have a Chief Engineer combining the functions of Major-General R.E. and Director of Works, and in the position of a Principal Staff Officer, which we had just succeeded in getting rid of. General Atkinson, who had just come out, pleaded that the new arrangements broke the heart of a meritorious Corps, which, as it was the same practice as prevailed at Home, seemed hardly reasonable.

Eventually, very reluctantly the Government of India swallowed their recent decision and in due course the Secretary of State approved Lord Rawlinson's

recommendation. But it tore through all principles of organization both in peace and war.

THE SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT

The story of the Supply and Transport system of India is one of surpassing interest to those who study organization and history. Because of the Mogul system, the old Commissariat Staff of the Army did not feed troops to any great extent in peace, and in earlier times even in war, but in war-time they had the superintendence of the purchase and were always much concerned with the difficulties of carriage, and also with the dealing with the Brinjaras, those transport tribes who carried goods from time immemorial to both markets and armies. It will be remembered how Arthur Wellesley's successes in Southern and Western India were largely contributed to by the wise way in which he encouraged these tribes and protected their caravans.

The old Indian Commissariat wore the scarlet staff dress of the Army and to some extent were the Q. Staff. But in the 'nineties this disappeared, and a Corps with a uniform like the Royal Army Service Corps was formed ; but instead of calling it the Indian Army Service Corps, the extraordinary cult of difference in nomenclature prevailed, and it was called the Supply and Transport Corps.

Now a Commissariat Service does not have its origin in those who seek the bubble reputation. From time immemorial, since there has been a standing Army, you must get your commissariat establishment from civil life or from those who have entered the Army through the usual commissioned channels. You will therefore only get those of the latter category who for reasons of their pocket, or because they do not like regimental life, enter the departments. Now it does not necessarily follow that those who do not

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like regimental life are "rotters." There are many excellent natures and admirable brains for whom the not very intelligent life of a regimental mess, despite its delightful camaraderie, is anathema. They and those who have to assist in the education of their brothers and sisters—no rare thing in the family of an officer's widow—or who have contracted early matrimony on scanty resources, are the recruiting ground of all the Army Departments except the Medical and Veterinary Services. Incidentally this is the reason for enhancing departmental pay. You must not remove all attractions from these Services in peace, or you won't get officers. That, however, is a digression. Sir Redvers Buller immensely improved the prestige of the Land Transport Corps when he formed the Army Service Corps, in which he originally intended to include all the Services of the Army. But in India the recruiting of the Supply and Transport Corps from the regiments or from Sandhurst, while it got a lot of young men who played polo nicely, and looked more like the rest of the Army, or who, like any other regimental officer of parts, made a good transport officer, did not attract anything very much in the way of brains. The men coming on in the 'nineties, who had started under the old ways, happened to be a brilliant crowd, but the next layer was pretty dull stuff, and this was what bore the brunt of the World War. So much was this the case that I could not find anyone in 1920, after trying their much recommended next senior, fit to take the head of the Corps.

On the other hand, looking down the list there was a fine leaven coming up in a few years' time.

Further, it had pleased the Government of India to keep the cadre of officers far too low for the feeding of the British Services or the troops on the Frontier, and the maintenance of war reserve, with the result

that work done in the Royal Army Service Corps by officers was done in India by warrant officers and Indians, among whom dishonesty and bribery was often prevalent. Warrant officers, exposed to the trickery of Indian contractors backed by Indian supply clerks, and often exiguously paid, did not find it easy to stand upright.

The result of this was that the Indian Supply and Transport Corps had incurred much odium during the War which it did not always deserve.

My distinguished predecessor, Sir Edward Altham, wrote to me when I was commanding in Mesopotamia to ask my views as to the widespread dislike and contempt of the Corps in the Indian Army. I replied that I thought it was by no means entirely earned and deserved, that they were shockingly unmanned, vilely served at times by dishonest subordinates and paralysed by the Chinese system of audit which I have described. Further, that people in high places, who should have known better, never listened to the pleas of the Corps for a proper establishment. There were rogues galore, but with one or two exceptions not among their commissioned cadre, who needed really all the support he could give them. From my subsequent experience as Q.M.G., I feel that what I said then was right.

General Vaughan, who was Sir Edward's Director of Supplies and Transport, was a very able man, though by no means in agreement with his own Corps in many points. On the other hand he had brains and vision, and was ably assisted by another clever member of his Corps, Lieut.-Colonel Norman-Young. It was these two men who under Sir Edward had framed the machinery to give effect to Government's new policy of feeding the Indian soldier in peace and war. They had devised a method which would, they hoped, make both the Army and the Corps familiar

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with the war-time system. There was to be a supply depot company and a divisional supply company in each divisional area. The units were to draw and hold ten days' supplies, and the divisional supply company, the divisional and brigade supply officers were to see that the requisitions were made on the depots and that the units got the stuff. I found this system in the middle of being given effect to. I should probably not have gone to work precisely thus had I been starting it myself, but in view of the Government in India having approved it as peace-time as well as war-time method, I could not but finish it and see that it was completed. I whole-heartedly agreed with it for the Frontier areas, as it allowed of our passing direct from a peace to a war footing without the least disturbance of system, and I well knew how in the past the base supply depots had never squared their accounts except by the time-worn precedent of a fire. And I knew that by having a Supply Depot Company at Quetta, Peshawar and Kohat, and at the Waziristan Base, immense sums would be saved Government on the outbreak of war.

A year or so later, in answer to urgent demands of the Chief to some reduction in officers of the supply service, I agreed that the Divisional Supply Company in the internal areas could also hold the stores in peace, always provided that the Supply Company on the Frontier remained. After something of a struggle on this latter point, His Excellency accepted my views that without the Depot Companies on the Frontier the old Frontier supply muddle must arise in war-time.

I was most anxious to get the name Supply Corps altered to Indian Army Service Corps, and this was approved with I think the cordial acquiescence of the Corps, which had seen enough of the prestige of the R.A.S.C. to desire to conform to its ways and status.

The purchase of supplies had become a big matter with the feeding of the Indian troops, and it had been established as a separate branch under a Controller directly under the Q.M.G. Supplies in India cannot be treated on the same lines as those at Home, for shops and contractors do not exist at every corner. Supplies divide themselves into two classes—"Local Supplies," such as fresh local produce, meat, chickens for hospitals, eggs, vegetables, firewood, etc., and those which must be bought where the market is, such as wheat, barley and the like, and which may not be available in every district. In this case it is possible to buy at an enhanced price from a local importing contractor, or to buy direct at the market in large quantities and distribute oneself.

This latter is what Sir Edward did. All local supplies, as before, were bought under the control of the District Commander, but all mass purchases were bought at the market centre for such commodities—wheat, for instance, at Lucknow and Delhi, by the Controller of Contracts; *ghee* in those areas in which the farmers produced it; tea and sugar at Calcutta in the market by a broker, and so forth. They were then distributed by the Controller as required by the Director of Supply and Transport. The Army had to face cost of distribution and wastage, but in purchasing from a local importer these items would equally be represented in the local price.

PURE FOOD AND THE FOOD LABORATORY

In any scheme to feed the Indian Army in peace a quite distinct factor had to be borne in mind, that of a possible belief that food was being contaminated for religious purposes. It will be remembered in the Mutiny that the British were accused of putting bonedust in the flour to destroy the Hindu caste and hogs' lard into the *ghee* in the bazaars. It was essential

to provide against any evil spreading of such details which agitators have often tried to do, and which might lash the Army to a blind fury. To cope with this "controlled" mills for *atta* and flour were established, viz. mills were hired which only ground Army grain. Then not only could good grain not be exchanged for inferior without detection, but it would always be possible to have committees of Indian officers to watch the process if any impurity propaganda should arise. Truly the path of the Q.M.G. in India is strewn with pitfalls.

Ghee was boiled in special stations, strained, tinned, and each batch set aside till a report from the Food Laboratory established at Kasauli reported it up to standard. *Ghee*, viz. the clarified butter used by all Indians, is the most tampered with of any article of food. The post-runner taking samples to Kasauli had many gauntlets to run at the hands of contractors' agents who wanted to substitute a better sample for analysis! Even *ghee* had its romance!

Flour and grain which had already passed a merchants' refraction test was tested at the laboratory to see that it was up to sample, while samples of proposed purchases were tested for gluten and the like. Guinea-pigs led an unhappy life on vitamin-less food and lime-juice substitutes, but for the first time in India both medical directorate and military supply were learning something of food. This laboratory, which Lord Rawlinson, who found difficulty in grasping its merits, wanted to abolish, saved Government literally millions. For instance, reserves of tinned meat, constantly tested, could be brought forward for use when approaching the limit of safety, and thus saved. The same with tinned milk and hospital stores. It is not too much to say that since the laboratory was started, no Government food stores were destroyed as unfit for consumption. But the

unthinking generals at times used to complain to the Chief of the useless transfer of stores the Q.M.G. ordered. The said transfer merely moved them to a place where they could be used rather than remaining in one place to grow too stale.

I had an amusing score over some cheese at Mian Mir. We only kept cheese for troops in the field since the War commenced, and I had a large surplus from the Mesopotamian reserve, which I could not use till the following winter for troops in Waziristan. So I sent it to the hills and brought it back in the autumn. The military world laughed. But the move cost 2d. a pound each way, and I should have lost 2s. to the State if I had left it to melt in Mian Mir. I can laugh now, but at the time I wanted to bite the know-alls who wrote of the follies of the Supply Service.

THE INDIAN ARMY CANTEEN BOARD .

This is a subject which attracted a good deal of attention a year or so ago. The complete failure of the Indian authorities to make any canteen arrangements for the Army in Mesopotamia for over a year, and when it did make the attempt the inefficiency, added to a similar breakdown in India during the Afghan War, made Sir Charles Monro anxious to institute a Canteen Board.

Canteens had hitherto been quite wrongly an Adjutant-General's subject, but they were transferred to the Q.M.G. and I was asked to get on with it. The first thing to be done was to ask the Board at Home to send us an expert officer to consider our problem. This was done, and Colonel Morton came to us and we were advised that there were enough British troops in Northern India to apply the system either to all India or to the Northern Division. In view of the good work that the best of the regimental contractors, the most willing and obliging of creatures if properly

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controlled, had done over many years, we were loath to evict them all at present.

But at the same time laboratory examination of stores bought at canteens all over India showed that most worthless rubbish was provided in many canteens, partly due possibly to the immediate post-war conditions of trade.

Accordingly a Board was formed on the same lines as at Home, and the War Office advised us to take their adviser as our first Controller. My experience of the Expeditionary Force canteens in Mesopotamia had been so good that I was anxious enough to have the system, for I felt that the contractor system must always break down in war, and we were then in the mood to feel that Armies existed for war. But I knew that there would be several difficulties. First, that of getting efficient employés at a price we could afford to pay, and the cost of bringing them to India. Secondly, the curse which India brings in the form of dishonesty to many subordinate Europeans, for the canker of the East soon spreads to them. Thirdly, that reductions of garrison might not give us sufficient custom. Further, I knew that the Indian contractor, using almost entirely his own tribe of relatives, suffered no losses from dishonest employés. I also knew that the bazaar system would be against us in the matter of popular prices.

The canteen could only sell new stuff. Not so the bazaars, so that soldiers and their wives often buy two-year-old goods at much less cost than fresh stores of the same brand even, and thus complain of canteen prices.

Nevertheless, the Board ran for some time with considerable success, but the Punjab garrisons of Europeans were much reduced from Colonel Morton's figures, and employés were a trouble. Dishonesty brought its results. A new Controller, appointed just as I

was leaving, got himself into unexpected trouble through the death of an Indian, and the Government of India finally gave up the experiment.

I wished afterwards that I had discouraged the project, knowing as I did the difficulties of India. But we were all full of the glamour of the Expeditionary Force Canteens and what they had done for the Army everywhere, and were fully aware of the failure in this respect in the Afghan War.

The N.A.A.F. canteens considered the matter of taking over the Indian Board, but wisely I think decided not to. Ramnagar is not a good place to try any business venture, and the dice are loaded against you and the Robin is rampant. (See p. 85.)

THE ORDNANCE SERVICES

The story of the Ordnance Services in India is of special interest in view of the recent changes at the War Office.

From time immemorial the Ordnance Services had been carried out by an Ordnance Department, recruited first from the ranks of the H.E.I.C.S. Artillery and afterwards from the Royal Artillery. The officers of the Royal Artillery remained nominally on the cadre of the Corps, but were permanently posted to the Indian Department. They carried out functions that in the Imperial Army were carried out by two separate bodies. They managed the arsenals, all the store-keeping and issuing of equipments and army stores to the Army, and they also managed the factories which made ammunitions and weapons, and the experimental establishments attached thereto. Since Lord Kitchener's day, when the policy was adopted of making the Army in India less dependent on Great Britain, this branch of the Ordnance Department had been much increased. Now in Great Britain the former duty, that of the store-holding and provision,

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had for many years been performed by an important and efficient Corps known as the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, recruited in the first case from the Army as a whole, while the scientific work of the factories was performed by officers of the active cadre of the Royal Artillery specializing in that kind of science.

In Great Britain, since the Esher Committee, store-holding and issuing were recognized as appertaining to the functions of the Quartermaster-General, and the Director of Equipment and Ordnance Stores was in peace and war one of the Q.M.G.'s heads of services, while the scientific artillery and ammunition work was carried out by the Director of Artillery, who was one of the directors in the Department of the Master-General of the Ordnance, the third member of the Army Council. It was always a blot on Lord Kitchener's final organization that he did not follow the War Office grouping of duties, and this had the added inconvenience that the universal war system, accepted throughout the whole Empire, did not follow the peace-time grouping of India. In India the Ordnance Services were under a separate top-liner, who had in many ways a similar position to the principal Staff officers, but who was the departmental chief of the Ordnance Department rather than a highly trained artilleryman. The actual work too done by the arsenals branch did not include the petty and household store-holding for the Army nor the clothing, these being handled by the Supply and Transport Corps. Now while perhaps the artillery officers of the Indian Ordnance Department did not wish to be charged with plebeian business, this was more generally due to the fact that there was a supply depot in every station and therefore a machinery for store-holding, while the arsenals existed only at certain central spots. Still in war-time the fact remained that the system in India meant two separate store-holding and distribution departments.

During the War this anomaly was removed and the Ordnance Department of Indian forces in the field was made to hold all stores.¹

When the War was over it fell to my lot to get these matters put on a permanent footing, and also to arrange for the great change that had taken place in the abandonment of the Mogul system, whereby units clothed themselves in all but full dress, and introduce the system whereby the Indian Army was supplied by the Ordnance Corps as in Great Britain. I was also instructed to carry through the formation of an Indian Army Ordnance Corps, to which existing Royal Artillery officers were to be transferred, only those officers who remained with the factories remaining regimental artillery officers as at Home.

Ever since the War the Director-General of Ordnance remained in the air shorn of half his duties, pending the carrying out of the recommendations of the Esher Committee for forming a fourth senior officer at Headquarters to control all production.

Lord Rawlinson would not proceed with this latter proposal, fearing to raise the question of the Army Membership with all its controversies, thus leaving the unfortunate Q.M.G. with a lot of departments and directors under his control which did not belong to him and which burdened him with an intolerable burden of work in addition to his legitimate duties, this too at a time when every sort of post-war difficulty was to be handled.²

THE MASTER-GENERAL OF SUPPLY

Just before the end of my tenure Lord Rawlinson produced a new grouping of Headquarters off his own

¹ This principally applied to the Army in Mesopotamia and on the Indian frontiers.

² Several branches were dumped on him *pro tem.* at the time of demobilization plus the military works, but none was taken off him.

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bat. He wanted to form at last the Master-General of Supply to parallel that of Master-General of the Ordnance at the War Office, as recommended by the Esher Committee, which was well and good. But he wanted to put under him the arsenals, that is to say, the Indian Army Ordnance Corps and its works. This I combated very strongly, but only on the grounds that this question had just been thrashed out at the War Office and had been decided against, and, if it was done here, it would only once again cross all the reins and make the peace and war responsibilities different. I ventured to urge that while it might be quite a good principle,⁹ and indeed one for which much could be said in these modern days, it complicated equipments to have two officers at Army Headquarters in the field responsible for the supply of the Army, and that until such a principle was accepted at Imperial Headquarters it was disastrous to introduce it in India. It was the infernal desire so common to Anglo-Saxons for the tail to wag the dog that had produced the desire to have what Lord Rawlinson imagined was the more suitable system. I am happy to say that he accepted my views, and the Master-General of Supply, formed, alas, too late to give me personally any relief, took over (a) the Factories, from the Director-General of Ordnance; (b) the Controller of Contracts, the Controller of Farms, and the Army Clothing Factories from the Q.M.G. I had borne the burden for three years with little thanks and rejoiced for my successor's sake.

It is interesting to note that the War Office has now considered it necessary to put the arsenals and store-holding under the Master-General of the Ordnance, and to have a Master-General at the Headquarters of an Army in the field. That is to say, two officers will be responsible for foreseeing the wants of the Army. So long as the Q.M.G. alone is responsible *for all move-*

ment to the front in the order that the C.-in-C. indicates, there is no valid objection, though the innovation a year ago produced a great deal of public discussion. The need for all sorts of technical and experimental services in the field for a modern Army made the want of a Master-General of the Ordnance at G.H.Q. in France in many ways most marked, and the new organization, or rather grouping, is in the way of progress. The change I understand is also to be followed in India.

But the new grouping at the War Office, as did that of Sir Charles Monro and Sir Claude Jacob in 1920, also places the Engineers, or rather the Works, under the Q.M.G., which is their spiritual home, an arrangement Lord Rawlinson upset when he created his illogical Chief Engineer.

THE REMOUNT SYSTEM

The Remount problem in India is an extremely complicated though interesting subject. The actual Remount Department before the War was concerned only with the mounting of British cavalry and the three regular or non-Silladar Indian cavalry regiments, and with the artillery. It also bought most of the transport mules for the Service other than for Silladar cavalry. It further was responsible for the control of the horse-breeding, which since Lord Curzon's time had become a big matter.

It was not concerned with horsing the thirty-six Silladar cavalry regiments, nor with providing camels or bullocks, nor was it concerned with the enumeration of the animal resources of the country for war requirements. That is to say, it was only doing part of its job. Apart from anything else, it was a wasteful system, as we had officers on behalf of the Director of Supply and Transport perambulating the country enumerating mules and camels, while remount officers

were in the same country looking after horse-breeding, registered mares and the like. In fact, for mobilization purposes there were two Directors of Remounts, and this with the Chief's approval I was determined to put a stop to. The Remount Department was peculiarly efficient, but it also led a very happy if somewhat isolated life, and had most of the fun and little of the grind of the job. So it was now enacted that all animals for the Army, other than edible ones, should be bought and mobilized by the Remount Department, and the only point capable of any argument was who should get the guinea-pigs for the food laboratory.

The horse-breeding set going by Lord Curzon with a view to producing more Army horses in India had been admirably conducted. I found that two large depots existed for running young country-bred stock, the produce of registered mares and Remount Department sires over whose progeny the Army had the right of pre-emption, but that these were for the part-mounting of British and non-Silladar cavalry and mules for the Mountain Artillery. Runs of several thousand acres existed on the Canal Colonies of the Punjab, splendid horses were being produced, and the only thing necessary was to see that these depots, if need be, could be used for all remount purposes and not necessarily kept entirely for young stock. I wanted the horse-producing countries put into circles with D.A.D.R.'s in charge, and district remount officers responsible for horse-breeding and enumeration in their circles. I also was anxious to have a remount officer in each command (D.A.D.R.) who should help in watching the horse life, as there was a saving to be made by his presence which would far more than cover his salary.

I found we had a huge war surplus of horses of a type for which there was no market, and that destruc-

tion or absorption was the only solution. I was very averse to destroy, but as a large number were heavy horses for which there was little need, and clumsy at that, we decided to horse the ammunition columns with this type, to their chagrin; but there was no alternative. I also had to write round to the Artillery to say that their remounts for some years would be nothing to write home about, as we had to absorb the war-stock before purchasing much more. Indeed this war-stock of young unmarketable but inferior artillery horses was a tragedy.

In fact, the whole horse problem in India at all times is entirely different from that in the United Kingdom, and in some sense it was more rational. In India the Army was the top of the light-horse market, in the United Kingdom it was almost bottom. But the horses produced for the Army were little use elsewhere, and that was one of the horse-breeding problems. In the United Kingdom the Army take the misfits of the half-bred hunter market, in India it takes the top, and the breeder finds it hard to place his misfits at all. Almost all artillery horses must come from Australia, as India can only produce such at vast cost, and such horses have little market except for the artillery. Years ago the port tramway system could have taken them, but now that is over.

To get the enlarged remount department and the problem of mobilization on good lines, I followed the same policy as Cowans had in bringing me to the War Office, viz. I got a Staff College gunner into the Department as assistant director—Lieut.-Colonel H. F. Salt, and a very great deal of help he was able to give to the director in his enlarged responsibility. The increase in personnel was found by reducing the A.S.C. officers formerly engaged in enumeration of transport animals.

LORD RAWLINSON'S DIFFICULTIES

I have referred to the financial troubles which overtook the Government of India and were reflected to the Army soon after Lord Rawlinson had arrived. Unfortunately it reflected itself on Army Headquarters in a difficult manner. The recommendations of the Esher Committee to allow the Principal Staff Officers to handle minor details of their budgets, with a view to expediting daily business, sanctioned though they were by Government, were held up by his Lordship. Under this arrangement I had three deputy financial advisers appointed to the Q.M.G.'s Branch, but they were hardly able to function. Sir Bupendra Nath Mitra had become the financial adviser to Army Headquarters, and would delegate nothing. He sat surrounded by a five-foot wall of files on every side, and no work could get through. He did as much as three men, but must do it all himself, till the situation was Gilbertian and trebled all our administrative work. The power of the purse and Lord Rawlinson's desire to control things himself automatically made him, Mitra, a grand Vizier and super-principal Staff officer, which was both absurd and maddening. The tragedy was that he was whole-heartedly on the side of Army efficiency, and in the big things that he got through for us was admirable, but the little things on which so much depended stuck as the years rolled by.

The financial stringency became worse than ever. It was no use saying that the actual cost of the Army in India was very small compared with her size and position, and her dangers. The reforms had placed revenues at the disposal of the Central Government which had little elasticity, and the calls were very many. The Government of India and the Secretary of State had appointed the Inchcape Committee at the end of 1923 to examine into the whole of the

expenditure of the Government of India and advise as to economy. A Commission is always useful as a sedative of public opinion, though of course the Government could have done it themselves had they chosen. All departments of the Government of India got busy overhauling their affairs. Lord Rawlinson, still anxious that his great spending department of the Q.M.G. should not be held up to execration, asked for a special inquiry into that branch. Lieut.-General Sir Walter Braithwaite was appointed President and Lieut.-General Sir Walter Campbell, after Quartermaster-General to the Forces, and formerly Q.M.G. to Lord Allenby, came out from Home for the purpose. I was extremely glad that they did. I and my directors were pretty sick of the dog fight that we had been fighting so long, to carry out Government's own policy and meet the requirements of the General Staff. Sir Walter Braithwaite had then no personal experience of Army administration or Q. work, but was especially wise on the general principles on which the British Army Staff system was based and on the working of that system in the World War. With the addition of one or two business men it was a helpful committee, and to them we were able to unburden our souls and also put before them some of the modifications we proposed in General Altham's plans and in the changes which the Government of India had introduced. The Committee's report was generally most acceptable to us, and orders were passed to us to go ahead with its recommendations. Only at one important point did I join issue, and that was the recommendation to reduce the big Remount Depot at Hosur near Bangalore. Our depots in the South and West were at Bangalore and Ahmednagar. The one at Hosur served half a dozen batteries and two British cavalry regiments, was especially convenient to the Madras shippers, and was an extremely temperate climate for the acclima-

tization of horses who changed their hemisphere—that is to say, changed their coating system with all its constitutional derangements. This is a point which ordinary soldiers never grasp. Further, the Ahmednagar Depot was always in water difficulties. To distribute the horses through the hot U.P. depots was possible, so far as accommodation went, but it burked the fact that the economic administration of a Remount Depot depends on a fodder farm, and the up-country depots had barely enough to feed their present quota. It seemed to me penny wise and pound foolish, but events may prove me wrong, and if the mechanized units are placed in the South that will of course have put the balance right.

THE INCHCAPE COMMITTEE

Then came the Inchcape Committee, for whom this window-dressing had taken place, and I had three searching days before that competent body. At the end of it Lord Inchcape rose in his place and said, "We want to congratulate you on the extremely business-like way in which the important departments under your control are managed." And they were good enough to say the same in their printed record. And as my four years of the Quartermaster-Generalship were drawing to a close, I may be said to have carried my bat, which perhaps, after those four years of hard labour, I deserved.

Poor Lord Rawlinson's tenure, too, was drawing to a close in a sad and dramatic manner. But I think that he left most of the difficult post-war problems solved, and the difficult military reforms which had been decided on just before his arrival, duly carried out; and I hope too that my successor, Sir William Marshall's Q.M.G. in Mesopotamia, Lieut.-General Sir Richard Stuart Wortley, found the ground little encumbered. My D.Q.M.G. Major-General, Sir Hast-

ings Anderson, who came to me a while at the end, was a tower of strength in these difficult times, and to my joy saw how the General Staff at times would embark happily on schemes without the least idea of where they might lead them or whether the Q.M.G. could do. I found him angrily reminding them that if they walked a hundred yards it meant the Q.M.G. had to run a mile—and there is no new thing under the sun.

For a while Major-General Sir Herbert Holman was my deputy before going to a division. He had been Lord Rawlinson's Q. in the Fourth Army and a great man in the field ; suffering the restrictions and rules of peace with an ill grace. We had been together at Sadon in 1892 and on the General Staff at Simla, and were very old friends.

Leaving Simla and one's friends and " Ramnagar " generally was a sad enough matter when my tenure ended. It is a country you either like or you loathe. My wife and daughter went Home for the boys' Christmas, and I ran down to one of the glorious young horse runs to spend Christmas and ride and shoot. Incidentally I took a nasty toss from a young horse, as I was mounting him, which put me to bed for a couple of days, and then I went on my farewell visit to the Lahore Base. This was commenced during the Afghan War, but was now being developed as a supply centre and a clothing store, which would immeasurably improve maintenance matters in the next Frontier War. In fact, all during the Waziristan operations it had enabled a most admirable supply of rations to get up without loss and deterioration.

Then I went back once more to the snows of Simla, where I found my whole branch intent on giving me a very kindly farewell dinner, Hastings Anderson in the chair, at which I expressed contrition for having fallen on any of them at times. But I could not resist

telling them that story of George Gambier, who had been ordered to apologize to his battery for the epithets he had used to them.

"Men," he said, "the General has ordered me to apologize to you for calling you b——y b——s, and I do so. But" (and he spoke with asperity) "you are b——y b——s, and you know it!" which was quite well received. For we had had a hard time of it, together at the hands of Mitras, financiers, and *hoc genus omne*.

At Delhi a few kind friends too gave me an informal farewell dinner, of a peculiarly charming type, and then my last night I dined with the Chief, who, poor man, was so worried by toothache that he could hardly say farewell, but sent me a characteristic and kindly telegram to Port Said. I had many Indian friends to say good-bye to, but the saddest of all was when my grooms brought my horses to the station and on to the platform by leave of their new owner, and Albert performed his salaaming trick.

So I sailed away from Bombay, thirty-six years after coming in, saying my farewells to the East and the Army, save that my name remains on the Active List in that supreme post of honour to an officer of the Royal Regiment of Artillery as Colonel Commandant, and in that capacity I may return to say *shah-bash* to that portion of the Regiment that serves in the "Shiny" and especially to the mountaineers,—

"And such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of Pike and Gun."

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This book comes as a wholesome and interesting corrective to the mass of sentimental and pseudo-romantic rubbish that has from time to time been written about the Highlands in the 'good old days.' In the spacious time of Queen Elizabeth life even in rich England, under a glittering surface, was hardly easy or refined, and in poor Scotland it certainly was not. The struggle for existence meant every man for himself, and even clan loyalty was ruled by this. 'The Arrow of Glenlyon' was the head of a branch of the Clan MacGregor which was then in much adversity. The author, from an exhaustive study of all available records and from tradition, has produced an extraordinarily interesting and skilful account of what life, with its struggles and shifts, hard fighting, lean years, intrigues and, at times, real romance was.



